

"If I had insisted on going to Tsinghua University, I must have studied to death by now!"

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To survive winter with health and sense of humor intact, Beijingers have come up with a variety of strategies to keep themselves intact.

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Baker is the overly familiar neighbor you always try to avoid.

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BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY DECEMBER 10 2004

NO. 184

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM



A Question of Nationality

Overseas Chinese raise possibility of dual citizenship

By Annie Wei/Nie Zhiyang

The subject of dual citizenship has become a hot issue in the Chinese press in recent weeks

With tens of thousands of people of Chinese descent scattered around the globe, the question now being asked is, should China recognize dual nationality?

A survey and report carried out by a Chinese community in Canada last year has been reprinted in several local newspapers: In October last year, the North Chinese Community of Canada ran a 16-day online survey, asking Chinese immigrants whether they wanted to retain their Chinese nationality after being granted Canadian nationality.

Founded in September 2001, the community is one of the largest Mandarin Chinese communities in the greater Toronto area, providing Mandarin services to newly arrived immigrants from the Chinese mainland.

Deputy secretary of the organization Steven Shi emailed *Beijing Today* a summary of the survey conducted last year. A total of 1,888 people voted, 1,750 of whom voted "yes." Of the remainder, 71 voted "no" and 67 ticked "I do not care." An overwhelming 92 percent of voters were did not want to surrender their Chinese nationality when they acquired Canadian nationality, and they hoped that China could recognize dual nationality.

However, according to Article Three of the Nationality Law of China: "The People's Republic of China does not recognize dual nationality for any Chinese national."

A law professor at a university in Beijing and member of China Reform and Opening Up Forum, who requested anonymity, said to *Beijing Today* Tuesday, "When those people applied for another country's nationality, they should have taken into consideration the results of losing their Chinese nationality."

He continued, "Many of my classmates went abroad eight or ten years ago. Later, some returned and found that some of their old classmates in China had become several times richer than they were. They knew China had more opportunities now, and they wanted to come back. It's natural that everyone wants to maximize their own benefits and people have the right to purchase a better life. However, nationality is not just about personal benefits."

A former employee of the Immigration Department of the Australian Embassy in Beijing said to *Beijing Today* on Wednesday that there are many kinds of immigration, and that the Beijing embassy only handles a small part of it, so he could not say whether the number of Chinese immigrants to Australia was increasing or decreasing. When pressed, however, he said, "I think it might be decreasing."

Australia started recognizing dual nationalities this year, "We recognize the countries which also recognize dual nationalities. China is not included," he said, "Because China only recognizes single nationality."

However several local newspapers have reported recently that certain government bodies are currently considering the possibility of recognizing dual nationality.

Li Baojun, vice-dean of the School of International Studies, Renmin University, holds a cautious view. He said allowing for the patriotic feelings and practical needs of Chinese people overseas, the Chinese authorities should provide convenience on related policies; however it is difficult to imagine that a complete revision on the law will occur any time soon.

Professor Zhong, who teaches at a university in western Canada was quoted in China's *International Her-*



Although they have been living abroad for generations, many people of Chinese descent retain the traditions of their homeland. Dragon dances such as this can be seen in Chinese communities all over the world.

Photos by Imaginechina



'Whatever the benefits, recognizing dual nationality would create a huge amount of work and require endless bilateral negotiations, such as on how to avoid over-protection or double taxation.'

aid Leader Monday as saying that Chinese mainland immigrants expectation of retaining Chinese nationality should not be simplified as "making the best uses of both sides."

The survey summary sent by the North Chinese Community of Canada said that if China recognized dual nationality, Chinese immigrants could better promote trade and cultural exchanges, without needing to go through the procedure of visa application; and they would not be considered as expatriates when they come back to China to work or invest. Also, successful older Chinese emigrants, after years of hard-work, could bring money, technology and experience back to China.

Most important of all though, recognition of dual nationality could enhance the cohesion of Chinese people.

Requesting anonymity, the founder of a local club in Beijing that includes as its members several overseas-educated Chinese CEOs, said to *Beijing Today*, "Personally, I have no interest

in this topic. We never ask each other's nationalities. We think it's something very personal."

However, the *International Herald Leader* article also said, those most enthusiastic about dual nationality are the Chinese students in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, who have settled abroad but plan to have a career back in China, while Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia, who account for up to two-thirds of the 33 million Chinese immigrants in the world do not support the idea of China recognizing dual nationality.

Zang Li, law professor of the International Law Department at Beijing Foreign Affairs University, said, "I don't think dual nationality is likely to be included in the Nationality Law of China in the future."

He said the nationality law defines the country's jurisdiction area; it protects not only its citizen's rights, but also their obligations.

Zang said Chinese nationality and Chinese people are different concepts; the first is based on law and sense, and the latter on the strong ethnic passion of the human nature.

But, given that more than 70 countries now allow dual nationality, should China follow this international trend?

Zang pointed out, "Different countries have different laws and tax systems. Whatever the benefits, recognizing dual nationality would create a huge amount of work and require endless bilateral negotiations, such as on how to avoid over-protection or double taxation."

There are other areas of potential difficulty beyond diplomatic conflicts and maintenance of protection mechanisms for overseas Chinese people, as Zang explained. "What happens when a person with dual nationality breaks the law or encounters an emergency in a third country? Which country should he call for help?" Zang said, "Criminals might also take advantage of differing penalties for some crimes between the two countries."

The survey represents a good wish from the non-government body, however, the government must have a different standpoint on the issue, "Zang said,

I believe divisions among different ethnic groups in a country is a key factor to consider, especially a country like China, with a population of 1.3 billion."

Steven Shi said in a phone interview with *Beijing Today* Wednesday morning, "Our report has attracted considerable attention from related governmental bodies. We know nationality is a very complicated issue. I think the fundamental needs of dual nationality for us is convenience."

Han Fangming, a member of National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was quoted in *Nanfang Daily* on March 12 this year as saying that recognizing dual nationality was difficult, and the feasible solution was to provide simplified procedures for overseas Chinese who want to stay in China for a long term.

The inconvenience as an expatriate or foreigner working and traveling in China is temporary, and China will improve its service to foreigners; but the concepts of fairly treating all nationals and recognition of nationality are totally different, Zang Li said.

Christina LaMontagne, a former Fulbright scholar from the USA now working for an AIDS program in China said, "Dual nationality is great and convenient for work and travel. This is my third time in China. Things have been improved a lot. Foreigners can live like local people if they want. I live in a Chinese complex now. Yes, the visa thing is still troublesome, especially to students, and the price is more expensive than before. But USA visa charges are expensive too."

Alex Wang, in his late 20s, executive director of River Pictures Entertainment, surrendered his Chinese nationality when he left for the USA as a teenager, "The main problem for expatriates in Beijing is we have to apply for the visa at least once a year. If you work for a big company, maybe the HR department will handle it for you, if not, it takes time, money and energy. So it can be very exhaustive."

As to other issues a non-Chinese national in Beijing has to deal with, such as mortgaging a car or an apartment, "Now? They are not difficult at all," Alex said.



China Plans Gradual Move to Flexible Yuan

China will move gradually toward a more flexible exchange rate, Premier Wen Jiabao said Wednesday. Speaking at the seventh China-EU Summit at the Hague, Wen said that loosening control requires macro-economic stability and a sound banking system in the world's fastest-growing major economy.

Trading partners like the US, want China to alter the exchange rate system, arguing that the fixed rate gives Chinese exporters an unfair advantage. But Wen said China has always kept the world's interests in mind. During the 1997 Asian financial crisis, China maintained the RMB exchange rate under great pressure, making considerable efforts to maintain world economic stability.

In the future, Wen said China will also take the global economy into consideration, while reforming its exchange rate system.

Wen's speech has attracted worldwide media's focus. Wednesday's Bloomberg commented, "The government has imposed administrative and lending curbs over the past year to cool credit-fuelled investment that led to power shortages, transport bottlenecks and inflation. The central bank sought to slow growth further by increasing the benchmark lending rate for the first time in nine years in October."

"China's policy of fixing the value of its currency to the dollar has made government efforts to slow its economy more difficult, the US Treasury Department said in a semi-annual report last week on the currency moves and economies of major trading partners," the article continued.

The *Financial News* Wednesday quoted Ba Shusong, vice head of the financial research institute of the State Council's Development Research Center, as saying, "Conditions are getting mature to reform the exchange rate mechanism."

"Hot money flowing into China will be restrained to some extent as the US Federal Reserve has entered a cycle of increasing interest rates. Domestic demand will become the main driving force for the economy as China's foreign trade becomes more balanced," Ba added.

Speculation that China may allow the yuan to rise against the dollar has fanned an inflow of speculative cash and triggered some Chinese households to convert dollars into yuan.

The government was paying a higher cost for keeping the exchange rate system unchanged, Ba said without elaborating.

(Edited by Ming Xin)

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2005 Economic Preparations Well Under Way

By Chu Meng

China will consolidate achievements resulting from the government's macro-economic control policy next year, according to reports from a central economic conference that closed Sunday.

The three-day annual conference, attended by all nine members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, summed up the economic situation for this year and planned for economic work in 2005. President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao both made important speeches at the conference.

2005 is the last year of the 10th Five-Year Plan period (2001-2005). Economic development and performance in 2005 will be related directly to the development of the next five-year plan.

The conference has made a six-

point overall arrangement for China's economic work in 2005. On top of the agenda is the continuation of work to strengthen and improve macro-economic control, correctly handle the degree and key points of control so as to maintain a steady and comparatively fast economic development and basically stable prices.

Secondly, work related to rural areas, agriculture and farmers will be reinforced, and efforts will be made to raise agricultural production capacity and promote the growth of grain output and farmers' income.

Other key points in the arrangement include: controlling the overall scale of investment in fixed assets; optimizing investment structure and making readjustments between investment and consumption; promoting interaction between the

eastern, central and western areas of the country, so that they complement each other and realize coordinated development; make efforts to promote economic system reforms and raise the level of opening up.

"The central authority's decision to strengthen and improve macro-control over the past year has helped restrain some unhealthy factors and avoid drastic ups and downs in China's economic development," commented Minister of Finance Jin Renqing, in a report in Tuesday's *People's Daily*.

Jin said China has also witnessed an evident slowdown of investment in some over-heated sectors, such as steel, cement, aluminum and real estate. Stricter control over loans and land use is believed to have played an important role in holding back investment.

China's GDP reached 9.3 trillion

yuan (US \$1.1 trillion) in the first three quarters of this year, a 9.5 percent year-on-year rise. The increase of the consumer price index, a key barometer of inflation, dropped nearly one percent month-on-month to 4.3 percent in October.

Jin also noted, "However excessive positive financial policy of this kind will slacken the effects of solid assets investment regulation and control under the pressure of inflation. It will also worsen the maladjustment situation of investment and consumption proportion. Therefore we have to maintain it at an appropriate level."

On the other hand, sectors such as agriculture, education, public health and social security are still very weak. These need to be strengthened with appropriate positive financial policies, Jin added.

China-Germany Cooperation Tightened

By Chu Meng

Cooperation between the governments of China and Germany and between businesses of the two countries will be heightened, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said at a press conference in Beijing Monday.

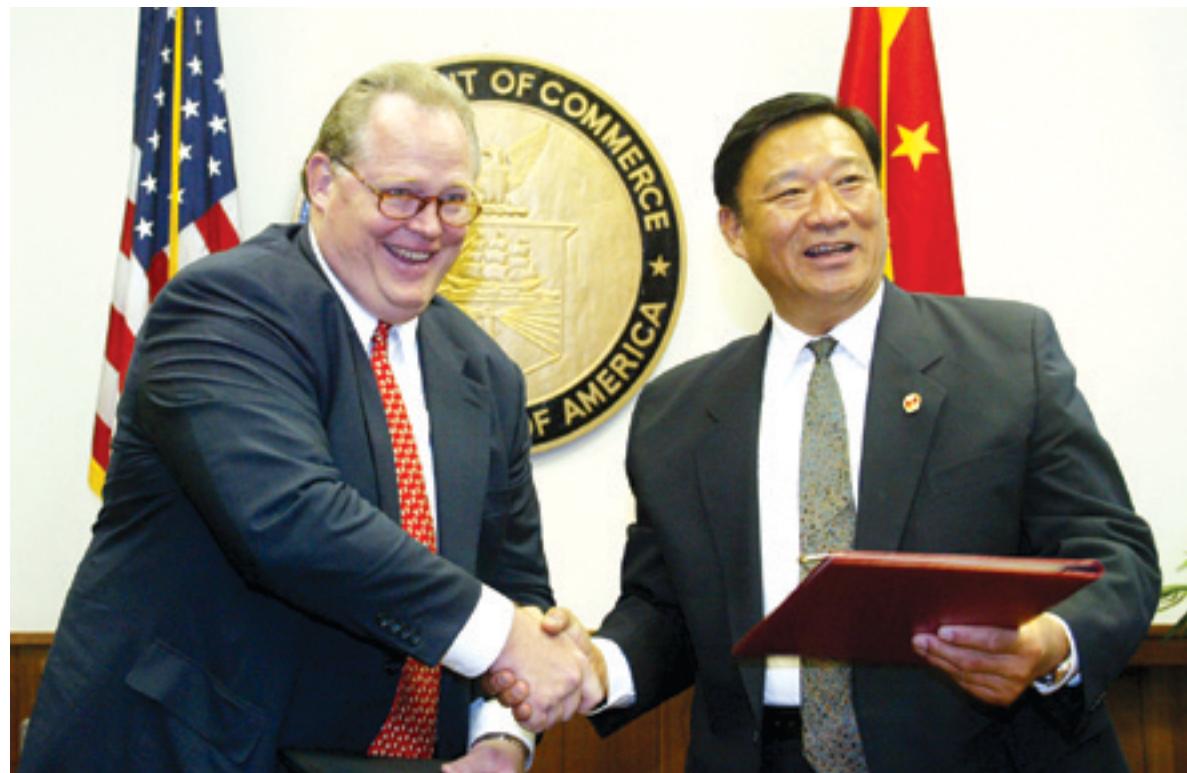
Schroeder, who is on a three-day working visit to China, and Premier Wen Jiabao signed 22 cooperative documents Monday evening at the Great Hall of the People, which will promote bilateral cooperation in various fields. The documents cover the aviation, railway, finance, bank supervision, automobile, agricultural products and digital communication sectors, with a total of expected investment of up to one billion yuan.

The chancellor said, "The signing of the documents indicates that bilateral cooperation is deepening and tightening. I am confident of witnessing a doubling of bilateral trade volume by 2010."

He also visited the China-Germany joint venture of Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering, which was established on August 1, 1989 with Air China holding 60 percent and Lufthansa 40 percent of the registered capital.

As one of the earliest China-Germany cooperative businesses founded here, it has become a model of business cooperation between the two countries. Air China and Lufthansa earlier renewed their contract, kicking off the second term of the joint venture from August 1, 2004 to July 31, 2029, with a registered capital of US \$187 million.

Schroeder also attended the ceremony of a new joint venture which has been renamed Beijing Benz-Daimler Chrysler Automobile from Beijing Jeep Corp. to produce Mercedes-Benz sedans with an investment of 143.7 million euros (US \$191.1 million).



American deputy secretary of commerce Grant D'Aldonas and director of China's Tourism Administration He Guangwei signed a memorandum of understanding on tourism cooperation in Washington Monday.

Xinhua Photo

Chinese Tourists May Soon Travel to US

Chinese tourists may soon be able to travel to America. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on tourism cooperation Monday in Washington, which adds the US to China's list of approved destinations for group tours.

According to the National Tourism Administration, Chinese citi-

zens will be able to travel to America by next May at the earliest, or no later than the end of next year.

Travel service agencies have designed several routes to cater to people's desire to see America. These trips will not be cheap, however. It is estimated they will cost around 25,000 yuan (US \$3,000) and people will have to pay a deposit of 100,000

yuan (US \$12,000).

Permitted tourist destinations for Chinese citizens now cover more than 60 countries. Last month, Brazil, Argentina and Chile were added to the list and since September 1, Chinese tourists have been able to visit 27 European countries.

(CRI.com)

Small Investors Granted More Say in Listed Companies

By Sun Yongjian

China's securities regulator issued new rules Tuesday, giving minority shareholders of listed companies more say in companies' major decisions.

Published on the website of the China Securities Regulating Commission, the new rules regulate that public shareholders of listed firms should actively participate in voting on major decisions of those firms.

Tong Daochi, deputy director-general of the Department of Listed Company Supervision under the CSRC, told Xinhua that the implementation of the new

rules is an important innovation and progress in protecting minority stockholders.

Under the new rules, for firms with shares traded on the Shanghai and Shenzhen exchanges, five key issues should be approved by the full shareholders conference and win at least half the votes at a public shareholders before being enacted.

These issues include the issuance of new shares, issuance of convertible corporate bonds, asset restructuring of the listed firms and the overseas listing of a subsidiary firm of the listed company.

A listed firm is required to make public the number of minority stockholders voting at its meeting, the amount of stock they own in the company and the ratio of that number of shares to the overall figure. The company must also release the voting results, the number of shares held by top 10 minority stockholders and their voting results.

Listed firms should increase involvement of minority public investors at their stockholders' meetings and provide an Internet-based platform for small investors to vote online, according to the new rules.

Shenzhen Seeks to Become China's Insurance Center

By Qiu Jiaoning

Shenzhen government has put forward proposals on the development of the local insurance industry, aiming at making the city China's insurance center within five years, *China Business News* reported Monday.

According to the proposals, the government will offer five million yuan and two million rewards respectively to insurance companies that establish headquarters in Shenzhen. Subsidies will be given to those that purchase new office buildings for their head-

quarters or regional headquarters at a rate of 1,000 yuan per square meter. Moreover, government agencies will simplify registration procedures and provide packaged services to those companies that are about to establish themselves in Shenzhen.

In addition, preferential treatment will be given to new insurance brokerage companies, insurance surveyors and loss adjustment companies and insurance agencies. If their previous year's legal profits after tax exceed 3 million yuan, 5 million yuan, 10 million yuan or 30 million yuan

the government will reward them 50,000 yuan, 1 million yuan, 2 million yuan and 5 million yuan respectively.

In order to attract more people with special expertise, some senior executives of insurance companies in Shenzhen will be offered a housing allowance of 1,000 yuan per month. Meanwhile authorities in Shenzhen will expedite transfer formalities for senior executives and their relatives.

The proposals encourage qualified insurance companies to be listed on overseas markets and support local insurance companies

to actively explore southern China and the international market.

Under the proposals, cooperation between Shenzhen and Hong Kong should be strengthened to develop advanced insurance products. Also, the two cities should jointly establish supervisory and exchange mechanisms to guard against illegal trans-boundary managing activities.

At present, there are seven headquarters, 21 subsidiary companies and more than 270 branch operations of insurance companies in Shenzhen, according to Shenzhen Insurance Regulatory Bureau.

Plan Aims to Keep 'Green Olympics' Promise

By Chu Meng

Beijing Municipality has established a Green Olympics regulation plan, with a total investment capital of US \$12.2 billion, in a bid to construct 20 key environmental protection projects in and around the capital. The plan was announced at the Asia Europe Meeting Symposium on Urban Forestry, which ended last Sunday in Suzhou.

According to the plan, by 2007, Beijing's urban forest coverage rate will reach 50 percent, three ecological environment barriers will be constructed around the city, and 50 urban forests of 10,000 square meters each will be planted.

No Playboy Bunnies for Shanghai

By Chu Meng

Shanghai's business administration department has rejected an application to open a Playboy Club, municipal spokesman Jiao Yang said yesterday at a government news conference. The rejection came only one day after the Chinese joint venture company of the US group had announced plans to open the venue.

Jiao said, "An examination by the Shanghai Administration for Industry and Commerce found (the proposed club) is not in accordance with corporate laws and the regulations concerning capital registration management."

On Tuesday, American iconic brand Playboy announced it had licensed Shanghai Entertainment to set up a new Playboy Club in Shanghai, which was scheduled to open at the end of 2005.

China Raises Limit on RMB Inflow and Outflow

By Dong Xin

China's central bank announced an adjustment to the limitation on taking renminbi (RMB) in and out of the country last Thursday. The maximum amount of RMB that an individual can take out on a single occasion has been raised from 6,000 to 20,000 yuan. The central bank also said that issuing and reconverting regulations for RMB as well as arrangements governing the liquidity of the foreign exchange reserve would be adjusted accordingly.

Zhang Jun, director of the China Center for Economic Studies, Fudan University, said the announcement expressed a further positive measure in terms of relaxing foreign exchange regulations. At the same time, it relieves pressure to revalue the RMB. RMB will be able to flow out of the country more easily, easing the strong demand in neighboring countries for the currency.

NDRC Takes Measures to Restrain Price Rises

By Deng Minjie

China has made progress in macroeconomic management, according to a report released by the National Development and Reform Committee (NDRC) Monday.

The report says price increases have been restrained in the past ten months, despite growing pressure in such areas as oil, coal and electricity since last year.

The NDRC has released a series of measures aimed at resolving this issue. The measures reinforce supply links between oil, coal and electricity and supplies of vital raw and processed materials.

These measures include strengthening supply capability in key areas, strengthening management, cutting irrational demand and making better use of domestic and oversea markets.

Threshold Lowered for Trust Bank Applicants

By Nie Zhiyang

New measures governing trusteeship of securities investment funds were unveiled Sunday.

The new measures, jointly issued by the China Securities Regulatory Commission and China Banking Regulatory Commission, ease the requirements on granting trusteeship, allowing more opportunities for smaller banks to qualify.

The method of testing the qualification of a bank by the scale of paid-in capital has been abolished under the new measures. The bottom line in the past was eight billion yuan, which kept all but the largest banks out of consideration.

The result of the certifying procedure will mainly depend on the principle that net assets and sufficient rate of the capital comply with relevant rules. Specifically, commercial banks seeking an entitled fund trustee certificate should have an annual net capital of not less than two billion yuan for the last three years and a sufficient rate of capital to accord with the relevant regulations.

Mainland Employment Rules Relaxed for SAR Residents

By Qiu Jiaoning

The State Administration for Industry and Commerce announced new measures Monday to further liberalize economic policies in Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, allowing residents to be self-employed anywhere in the mainland from next year, *Beijing-based Star Daily* reported Tuesday.

In the past, residents from Hong Kong and Macao could only apply for individual industrial and commercial entity rights and conduct retail business within Guangdong Province. As a result of agreements the mainland signed with Hong Kong and Macao in October, residents from those regions will be able to directly apply to the ministry for individual business permits without requiring approval from departments responsible for foreign investment as of January 1, 2005.

According to the measures, business scope includes retail business excluding tobacco, residential services and some other service trades, however franchised businesses are excluded. The new regulations apply only to individual operations with not more than eight employees and an area of operation not exceeding 300 square meters.

By Chu Meng

Lenovo Group and IBM announced Wednesday in Beijing they had reached a definitive agreement for the China's biggest personal computer maker to acquire the American company's personal computing and laptop divisions in a deal worth \$1.25 billion. The move will make Lenovo the world's third largest PC maker capable of earning annual revenues as high as \$12 billion.

Lenovo bought all of IBM's notebook and desktop computing sections and related operations, including research and development, distribution and sales and customer and after-sales service facilities. The deal also gives Lenovo rights to use IBM's Think brand for five years and to two research and development centers in Japan and the US.

"This is a breakthrough in Lenovo's journey towards becoming a world-class company," said Lenovo Group Chairman Liu Chuanzhi.

Payment will take the form of

IBM Deal Makes Lenovo World's No. 3 PC Maker

\$650 million in cash and \$600 million in Lenovo Group common stock, making IBM the second-largest shareholder in the Chinese computer maker with a total 18.9 percent stake.

Lenovo will also assume approximately \$500 million of net balance sheet liabilities from IBM and take control of the PC manufacturing section of IBM's joint venture International Great Wall Company in Shenzhen.

Following completion of the transaction, Stephen M. Ward, IBM senior vice president and general manager of IBM's Personal Systems Group, will take over as CEO of Lenovo, and Yuanqing Yang, the current CEO, vice chairman and president of the domestic company, will become chairman.

Yet industry analysts are not convinced that Lenovo is ready for such a bold move. "Though this new and booming Chinese enterprise has plenty

of cash, it cannot really handle huge business volume like that of IBM's PCs and lacks international management experience, especially concerning foreign personnel management. It could get choked up, like a snake trying to swallow an elephant," William De Vilder, chief investment officer at US-based Fortis Investments, was quoted as saying in a Reuters report yesterday.

IBM appears to be a surer winner from the deal. "The sale of its comparatively low-profit PC and laptop divisions will strengthen IBM's competitiveness with rivals like Dell...and Hewlett-Packard," Gartner analyst Martin Gilliland said. "Moreover, cooperating with China's top IT giant, who already has a strong stance in the domestic market, will facilitate IBM's strategy to occupy the China and Asia markets."

IBM Chairman and CEO Samuel J. Palmisano said, "Today's announcement further strengthens IBM's focus in the world IT industry."



Lenovo Group Chairman Liu Chuanzhi and IBM Chairman Samuel J. Palmisano sealed the deal with a handshake on Wednesday.

Xinhua Photo

China Aviation Oil Tarred in Singapore

By Sun Yongjian

China Aviation Oil (Singapore) Corp has been mired in deep trouble after the company had lost \$550 million in speculative oil derivative trading, a figure surpassing the company's total market value, as it acknowledged in an official statement last Tuesday.

The Singapore Exchange-listed company said it had begun trading in oil derivatives from its own accounts in 2003, partly for hedging purposes, though it also engaged in speculative trading.

When international oil prices rose sharply in October 2004, China Aviation Oil faced significant margin calls on its open derivative positions, and closing the positions had since led to accumulated losses of around \$390 million, it said. The company said it was in the process of closing the remaining outstanding positions, which it estimated would add up to another approximately \$160 million in losses.

To stop the fiscal bleeding, the company had halted all speculative oil derivative trading and suspended CEO Chen Jiulin, the statement said.

At the request of the listed company, its mother company, China Aviation Oil Holding Company (CAOHC), granted a shareholder's loan of approximately \$100 million so it could meet its liquidity requirements.

In its latest public statement issued Wednesday, the company said CAOHC had set up a special task force at the end of November to lead its restructuring, investigation and rehabilitation processes.

The company had taken steps to set up a new wholly-owned subsidiary to continue jet fuel procurement, it said. The new branch would receive financial support from CAOHC by way of an injection of new funds into a trust account, enabling the subsidiary to continue the listed company's jet fuel procurement business on an agent basis.

After briefly disappearing, Chen Jiulin returned to Singapore on Wednesday, the statement said, and was placed under arrest. Chen had been released on bail and was assisting Singapore's Commercial Affairs Department in their investigations, it said.

New Fund Transaction Rules on the Books

By Sun Yongjian

The Shanghai Stock Exchange announced on Sunday that its revised transaction rules for securities investment funds had been approved by the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and put into effect on Monday.

The revised rules, published on the exchange's Web site, put forward some new regulations concerning setting up funds, information disclosure, delisting of funds and other issues.

Securities investment funds to be listed in the Shanghai exchange must now first receive approval from the CSRC, have contracted terms

of at least five years, have no less than 1,000 shareholders and contain a minimum of 200 million yuan.

Funds are also required to release information disclosure reports within two working days of listing.

Trading of listed investment funds may be suspended when public media report rumors that information was manipulated or improperly disclosed to direct transaction prices or in cases of unusual trading activity.

Violations of relevant laws and regulations by fund managers or information issuers will also prompt trading suspensions and investigations by state authorities.

Shenzhen Exchange Debuts Primary Dealer System

By Sun Yongjian

The Shenzhen Stock Exchange announced on December 6 that it had launched a new primary dealer system.

A primary dealer is a qualified association member of the exchange put in charge of continuous price quoting and relevant affairs in accordance with regulations for listed open-ended funds, and even allowed to handle securities transactions with investors with its own assets,

the *Economic Survey* reported in September.

"The primary dealer system was put in place to invigorate the market in this period of weakness," Beijing Securities Co. analyst Shi Zhenguo told *Beijing Today*.

The plan for the primary dealer system was created

on September 29. The goals of the system are three-fold – to promote transaction liquidity of open-ended funds, to improve securities firms' functions in developing the fund market, and to prepare for the establishment of market maker rule – *Shanghai Securities* said Monday.

Nine securities companies have won primary dealer qualification, including Guotai Jun'an Securities, Galaxy Securities and PingAn Securities, the Shenzhen Stock Exchange announced.

Primary dealers would be allowed to hold proportions of transacted funds and conduct transactions according to market conditions, but were obligated to do transactions with the interest of raising market liquidity, Shi said.

Firms Fined for Pirating Microsoft Products

By Nie Zhiyang

The National Copyright Administration of China (NCAC) announced last Saturday that it had punished two Chinese corporations for illegally copying a computer operating system exclusively owned by Microsoft.

In June 2004, at Microsoft's request, the NCAC launched investigations and discovered Beijing Central Press Union Digital Technology Co. had made over 500,000 illegal copies of Microsoft's operating system recovery CDs between November 2001 and June 2003, and Tianjin Minzu Culture CD Co. had printed 4,000 pirated copies in 2002.

The administration responded by hitting Beijing Central Press Union with a fine of 80,000 yuan and confiscated all its illegally-gained profits, while Tianjin Minzu received a 10,600 yuan fine.

The NCAC said the actions showed the Chinese government's serious attitude about protecting intellectual property rights and fighting piracy.

In a written statement, Microsoft expressed its appreciation of the Chinese government's guarantees of ownership rights, something it said was imperative for the development of the software industry.

Though the companies guilty of copying the software have been penalized, the whereabouts of the hundreds of thousands of illegal CDs they produced are unknown.

Domestic Oil Giant Readyng World-class Refinery

By Sun Yongjian

Beijing-based China National Offshore Oil Corp (CNOOC), one of China's three major state-backed oil firms, is gearing up to invest 16 billion yuan to construct a world-class oil refining factory in Dayawan, Shenzhen, the company said in a statement posted on its Web site last Thursday.

Construction of the project began on December 1 and plans called for building a facility capable of refining 12 million tons of oil a year, especially crude

oil taken from the Bohai sea, it said. The refinery should begin operating in 2008.

Most of the equipment used at the refinery would be imported and CNOOC had already started the process of accepting bids for the equipment import contracts, Liu Junshan, senior news executive at the company, told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

Zheng Changbo, assistant to CNOOC's general manager, said that the goal of the project was to be truly world-class and internationally competitive.

Sony Ericsson Moving Headquarters to Wangjing

By Chu Meng

Leading international supplier of multi-media mobile products Sony Ericsson is moving its China headquarters to the Zhongguancun Electronics Town in Wangjing, Chaoyang District, and the foundation-laying ceremony for the new center was held Wednesday.

The headquarters would occupy around 40,000 square meters of land and construction was projected to be finished by 2006 at a total cost of 400 million yuan, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported. The structure would include the company's China research and development institute, it said.

Other international tele-



Ground breaking Xinhua Photo

communications firms like Motorola, LG and Panasonic are expected to follow Sony Ericsson to the Zhongguancun Electronics Town in the near future. The area offers convenient access to Capital International Airport, the Fourth and Fifth Ring Roads and commercial centers such as Asian Games Village and Yansha.

UPS Expands Reach in Domestic Market

By Deng Minjie

US-based United Parcel Service Inc. (UPS) signed an agreement last Thursday to purchase Beijing-based Sinotrans Air Transportation Development Co.'s express parcel delivery operations in 23 major domestic cities for \$100 million.

The shift would first take effect in January in the cities of Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Qingdao, and UPS would assume control of businesses in the other 18 cities by the end of 2005, according to a statement on Sinotrans' Web site.

"We will have a total of 1,700 employees in the 23 cities by then. In addition, UPS plans to provide non-stop air

delivery service next year between the United States and Guangzhou and we will establish a freight transport hub in Shanghai in 2007," Grace Zhu from the marketing department of UPS' China headquarters told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

The two companies previously collaborated to set up the joint venture Sino-trans UPS International Co. in 2003. Under the new deal, UPS also has the option to purchase Sinotrans' 50 percent stake in that company.

China's commitments for entering the World Trade Organization state the country must open the domestic express delivery field to foreign capital in December 2005.

Huge Used Car Market Opens in Capital

By Deng Minjie

The expanded Beijing Used Vehicle Market reopened for business on Sunday in Fengtai District following the completion of its second phase of construction.

By the time all work is done in the middle of next year, the market should be the largest used car dealership and service center in all of China.

Skyworth Looks Ahead after Chairman Released on Bail

By Qiu Jiaoning

Skyworth Digital Holdings (Skyworth) has applied to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange to resume trading, but the timing of the anticipated approval of that application is unclear, Skyworth Chairman Huang Hongsheng was quoted as saying by *Beijing Youth Daily* on Wednesday.

Huang Hongsheng was arrested on November 20, 2004, and charged with corruption and other crimes. He was released on bail on December 10, 2004, pending trial. The administration responded by hitting Beijing Central Press Union with a fine of 80,000 yuan and confiscated all its illegally-gained profits, while Tianjin Minzu received a 10,600 yuan fine.

The NCAC said the actions showed the Chinese government's serious attitude about protecting intellectual property rights and fighting piracy.

In a written statement, Microsoft expressed its appreciation of the Chinese government's guarantees of ownership rights, something it said was imperative for the development of the software industry.

Though the companies guilty of copying the software have been penalized, the whereabouts of the hundreds of thousands of illegal CDs they produced are unknown.

The two defendants appeared in court last Wednesday and were released on cash bail of HK\$1 million each last Thursday, under condition they surrender their travel documents and not leave the territory, the ICAC said in a statement. At the request of the prosecution, the case was adjourned until March 2 for further investigation and collection of evidence, and the commission was considering whether or not to press additional charges, it said.

Motorcycle Maker Buys Car Company

By Pan Hao

Chongqing Zongshen Group Import and Export Co. announced the purchase of a majority share in Anhui Tongba Automobile Manufacture Co. last Thursday and said it would rename the company Anhui Zongshen Tongba Automobile Manufacture Co. Zongshen disclosed it paid 15 million yuan for the 80 per-

cent stake in the company.

Zongshen has put itself in a specialized position to capitalize on a gap in the domestic auto market," Liu Yusheng, head of Zongshen's automotive department, told *Beijing Today* on Monday.

Zongshen, a large state-owned enterprise, hoped to use private firm Tongba to lower its production expenses, he said.

OPEC Prepares to Keep Cool despite Plunging Oil Prices

By Sun Yongjian

London, December 5 (AFP) – Despite a recent plunge in oil prices, OPEC producers appear to be in no rush to cut output quotas and markets expect the taps to be left wide open when ministers meet in Cairo this week.

OPEC has boosted output substantially in recent months in response to unbridled consumption in China and the United States, as well as supply disruptions in Iraq and the Gulf of Mexico and threats to output elsewhere.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' current production quota, excluding Iraq, is 27 million barrels per day although its real output, including Iraq, is thought to be closer to 30 million bpd.

Oil prices have now fallen by about a quarter from the record high 55.67 dollars a barrel seen in New York in October – plunging

by 12 percent in just two days last week – as supply fears faded.

Analyst's Take:

As an important measure to keep the equilibrium between oil supply and demand in the international oil market, OPEC launched a ceiling production in 1982 which remains effective today.

Daily oil production should not surpass 27 million barrels, according to OPEC policy, but in fact, the potential daily production capacity in OPEC countries is estimated at 31.5 million barrels.

However, OPEC policy has been found to be very limited in stabilizing the international oil market.

Although oil supply in the international market is still efficient and the balance between supply and demand is basically maintained – for instance, world oil demand in 2004 reached 82.4 million barrels a day while worldwide supply reaches

83.4 million barrels – a panic psychology is common in the international oil market. People are always anxious that oil supply could be cut off by some random factor such as an unstable political situation in the Middle East, a Nigerian protest etc.

In the meantime, OPEC's decision to boost or cut oil production depends on short-term expectations. Oil demand in the international market in the first quarter should be high, according to previous years. Thus the whole world depends on OPEC, especially psychologically. OPEC produces 40 percent of the world's oil, and its proven reserves fill 78.3 percent.

There are also some man-made speculative factors effective in deciding the prices of oil futures, such as hedge funds, hot money and multinational oil magnets active on the oil futures market.

OPEC countries' influence can be seen most in some developing countries including China, where oil demand is quite considerable due to her high speed of development.

China's oil imports per year surpass 100 million tons, with 40 percent of domestic oil consumption relying on imports, according to statistics released by International Energy Agency (IEA).

But we can conclude China is not the original cause of high oil prices because her oil consumption occupies only about seven percent of the whole world's. China's proven reserve, demand and refining capability are very limited too.

To solve the constant issue of oil shortages, China should develop an energy-conserving economy.

– Liu Ming, associate researcher with the Institute of World Economic and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

(Sun Yongjian)

Dollar Plummets to Lifetime Low vs Rising Euro

London, November 7 (Reuters) – The dollar sank to a new lifetime low against the euro on Tuesday after a warning by European officials on the euro's rise went unheeded by investors determined to dump the US currency.

In a joint statement late on Monday, the European Central Bank and euro zone finance ministers gave their starker warning to date that they were unhappy with the euro's strength.

But the dollar, under pressure from concerns about the massive US current account deficit, touched an all-time low near \$1.3468 and a 12-year low against sterling beyond \$1.95 early in the European session.

"The comments from the (euro group) meeting were largely repeating previous statements and they are not going to stem the current rise in the euro," said Ian Stannard, foreign exchange strategist at BNP Paribas.

Stannard also said a report in the Wall Street Journal Europe questioning the US government's triple-A bond rating hurt the greenback.

A trader at a US bank said the WSJE article, which canvassed investors' opinions on the US' rating, triggered selling in a market already prepared to take the dollar lower.

Local Report:

The quantity of US dollars sold on the Shanghai foreign exchange market have been rising sharply in recent months amid fears of a further decline in the value of the greenback against major currencies, the Securities Times reported.

The newspaper said that at the Shanghai branch of Bank of China, individual clients sold a total of US\$180 million in August, while the figure rose by 17 percent in September and 34 percent in October.

Increased selling of the US dollar was also seen in other cities, the paper noted. By the end of October, the value of foreign exchange transactions had risen 30 percent to US\$75.92 billion at the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, one of the four largest national banks in China. Recent speculation that Beijing will shift the current yuan-dollar peg to a higher level also gave local investors an excuse to get rid of their dollar holdings, the paper said. Currently the yuan is allowed to float only within a narrow range around 8.3 yuan per dollar.

By the end of October, financial institutions in China had a total of \$83.6 billion in foreign-currency deposits, a \$3.8 billion drop from the same month last year, the paper said, citing figures released by the country's central bank. A Shanghai-based currency trader said similar selling was also seen in the futures market, as local enterprises try to avoid further losses if the US currency continues to fall, the paper reported.

In October, the average daily volume of interbank foreign exchange transactions topped US\$1 billion, of which trading in US dollars grew 33.5 percent from the same month last year, according to the paper.

The Chinese Government has repeatedly said it would keep the exchange rate stable. It is understood that a large amount of Chinese foreign exchange reserve is in the form of US dollars.

– Shenzhen Daily, December 7



The Panama Canal management authorities announced Tuesday that they will raise the transportation fee for container cargo 65 percent over the next three years.

Xinhua Photo

Russia Wants New Business Partnership with India

Bangalore, December 5 (AFP) – Russia is seeking a new economic partnership to boost a decades-old friendship with India, envisaging sophisticated arms sales, high-end technology swaps and political support on the world stage.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's three-day visit to India that ended Sunday was his first chance to talk with leaders of the communist-backed Congress government elected in May.

The trip included two days in the software hub of Bangalore where Putin spoke to business leaders, toured showcase high-tech firm Infosys Technologies and the country's air flight research center, Hindustan Aeronautics.

Moscow had been hoping the trip would expand trade, energy and traditional military ties after India became increasingly close to the United States under the previous Hindu nationalist government.

While no deals were signed, the visit highlighted Russia's support for New Delhi's bid for a seat and veto rights on any enlarged UN Security Council.

India, for its part, said it fully supported Russia's early entry into the World Trade Organization. Russia is the biggest economy outside the group.

Russian officials said Saturday they would welcome Indian companies bidding for the assets of Russian oil giant Yukos, the country's biggest oil exporter, due to be sold off this month.

In Bangalore, Putin was welcomed to the Infosys campus by the company's founder N R Narayana Murthy. He toured the firm's Global Management Center, which offers infrastructure management to clients. Infosys has more than 30 offices worldwide employing 30,000 employees.

He told Infosys employees in Russian through an interpreter, according to an Infosys spokeswoman, that Russia and India could work together in the IT sector and on innovative technologies.

Analyst's Take:

As intimate strategic partners, India and Russia have always maintained friendly rela-

tions. Their trade cooperation goes far beyond acts of purchase and sale. The two sides are making redoubled efforts to establish closer co-operative ties in some key economic realms such as energy resources, bilateral trade and military industry.

The biggest trade between India and Russia is the arms trade, playing a crucial role in forging closer links. In 2003, weapons exports to India accounted for 39 percent of total weapons exports with a trade volume of about US\$1 billion. India and Russia will jointly develop, design and produce weapons exploring a new crucial avenue to further military cooperation between the two countries. Moreover, Russia would like to provide more advanced weapons to India than other countries through their special strategic partnership.

Energy cooperation has become a crucial part of the two countries' relationship and will certainly make rapid progress in future. Russia is well endowed with oil and natural gas has decided to strengthen energy cooperation with India to expand its overseas energy market, part of President Putin's energy diplomacy. India, an oil-poor country has to import 70 percent of its energy consumption and regards energy security as important as its state security. Hence, India is trying to step up purchase of stocks and mining rights for overseas oil fields instead of a single oil import strategy. Under such circumstances, India must look for stable and diversified crude oil supplies and thus remains eager to cooperate with Russia.

How to strengthen bilateral trade is of interest to both sides. There is still ample space for them to develop trade relations. They are expected to further trade cooperation, especially in the IT industry and high technology such as genetic engineering, nuclear power and space science.

On the whole, fresh vitality will be infused into the traditional bilateral relations between India and Russia through expanding cooperative exchange on energy, trade and the military after Putin's visit to India.

– Ma Jiali, research professor of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (Qiu Jiaoning)

USA to World: for Scientific Reasons, We Won't Budge on Climate Change

Buenos Aires, December 8 (AFP) – The United States, the world's largest producer of global-warming gases, said it will not change its approach to climate change, charging that the Kyoto Protocol was not underpinned by scientific fact, but based on politics.

Harlan Watson, appeared unruffled.

"Kyoto is a political agreement, it's not based on science," he said, adding "we do not intend to change our approach" to climate change.

The Kyoto accord, the world's most ambitious and complex environmental treaty, legally commits 39 industrial nations and territories, including Japan and Europe, to trim their output of six greenhouse gases – especially carbon dioxide – by at least 5.2 percent by 2012, compared with 1990 levels.

Some delegates at an international climate change conference here lamented Washington's stance, saying the problem of global warming is accelerating much faster than previously believed.

But Washington's senior climate change negotiator,

Gazprom Board Approves Yukos Bid

Moscow, December 8 (AFP) – The Russian gas giant Gazprom said its board of directors had given its go-ahead for the state-controlled firm to bid for the main production unit of embattled oil group Yukos.

"The board of directors approved the participation of Gazpromneft in the auction of 76.79 percent of Yuganskneftegaz," Gazprom said Wednesday.

Russia is putting up for

IBM Wins Lloyds TSB Network Contract

California, December 8 (NewsFactor) – US computer giant IBM has signed a seven-year, 500-million-pound (US\$969 million) contract with Lloyds TSB to supply the UK bank with DSL-based Internet telephony and data services, replacing incumbent service provider British Telecom (BT).

"Lloyds TSB is the first major UK company to actually go for a fully converged voice and data network," IBM UK spokesperson Bill Mew told NewsFactor.

"The deal involves 70,000 VoIP phones, the largest implementation ever in the

UK – and one of the largest in Europe."

VoIP (voice-over-Internet telephony) is a technology that allows users to carry out voice calls over an Internet connection.

IBM will act as the strategic technology partner for Lloyds TSB, while network integration and management for the bank's branches and ATMs will be supplied by UK-based virtual network operator Vanco. Communications traffic between Lloyds TSB branches and ATMs will be carried over business telecom operator Energis's optical-fiber network.

BBC to Keep Worldwide Division

London, December 8 (The Deal.com) – British Broadcasting Corp., the world's largest public broadcaster, said Tuesday it may seek buyers for some of the smaller parts of its empire although the mooted divestment of its giant BBC Worldwide division will not occur.

The BBC announced the outcome of a major strategic review it has been conducting for several months ahead of the renewal of its 10-year charter in 2006. It includes some of the biggest budget cuts in its 82-year history, slashing at least 10% of its staff and more

than \$550 million. Among the major decisions the public service broadcaster had to make was whether to seek buyers for Worldwide, which includes the rights to sell popular BBC programs abroad as well as channels like BBC Americas and magazines like the Radio Times.

BBC director general Mark Thompson said the company had decided to retain the core of Worldwide, including BBC Americas and most of its magazines, because these assets offer important growth opportunities.



Xinhua Photo

Energy Fraud Case Goes to Jury

Kansas City, Kansas, December 8 (AP) – The federal fraud trial for two former Westar Energy Inc. executives is now in the hands of the jurors.

After seven weeks of complex testimony, the six-man, six-woman jury received the case late Tuesday afternoon and will begin deliberations Wednesday morning.

Former Westar chief executive David Wittig and former executive vice president Douglas Lake are charged with trying to loot the largest electric utility in Kansas. They face 40 counts each and at least 10 years in

prison, if convicted.

Among the charges, the men are accused of using company airplanes for personal travel without reporting it as compensation; manipulating board members to have Westar buy or invest in companies in which Wittig and Lake had personal interests; and pushing a combined merger of the utility and spin-off of unregulated businesses that would have garnered the two men millions of dollars.

In many instances, prosecutors say the men falsified company documents to hide their activities from company directors or federal regulators.

Nike Sorry after China Bans 'Chamber of Fear' Ads

By Zhou Ying

Nike issued a public statement on Wednesday apologizing for a new commercial that upset and offended people around China and was the subject of an outright ban imposed last Friday by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) for insulting Chinese national dignity.

The American sports goods giant explained that the commercials were not intended to show any disrespect to the time-honored culture and traditions of China, which the company said was a crucial market for its development.

The offending ads, called "LeBron James and Chamber of Fear," were broadcast on several stations in China and other regions of Asia last month. They depict

young NBA star LeBron James charging through a video game-like setting and overcoming such opponents as an elderly kungfu master, two women in traditional Chinese garb and a pair of green dragons, traditionally considered divine symbols in China.

A statement posted on SARFT's Web site on Monday explained the spot "violates regulations that mandate that all advertisements in China should uphold national dignity and interest and respect the motherland's culture... It also goes against rules that require ads not to contain content that blasphemes national traditions and culture."

The ban was preceded by public outcry across China and even from Chinese in Singapore, who signed a petition for the ads to be

blocked.

The Shenyang, Liaoning-based *Chinese Business Morning Paper* reported last Tuesday that many people were angered by the spots after they hit the airwaves. A Mr. Wang from Shenyang was quoted as saying that the Chinese characters portrayed in the commercial were weak and ineffective, traits he found an affront to national pride.

Zhou Xiaomeng, account director at Shanghai@PR consulting, Nike's public relations agent in China, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the commercials were meant to take cartoon versions of characters from classic Hong Kong movies of the 1970s and put them in a contemporary, hip-hop-inspired context.

"We just wanted to encourage young people in Asia to bravely move forward and overcome obstacles in their way, no matter how difficult the road before them is," Zhou said.

Nike would accept and respect SARFT's decision, he added.

"Chamber of Fear" is not the first foreign advertising campaign to raise national ire in China this year. In September, many people were upset by print ads for Nippon paint that portrayed a coiled dragon sliding down a pillar that had been coated with the Japanese product, implying it could not get a grip on the smooth surface.

The spots were quickly pulled after sparking complaints that the falling dragon was a direct insult to Chinese tradition.

Local Cops Bust Cross-border Drug Ring

By Wang Fang

Police from Beijing in late November uncovered and shut down an international drug trafficking gang whose five members hailed from the capital, Shanxi Province and Burma and confiscated 14.55 kilograms of heroin, opium and the synthetic drug "ice", *Beijing Youth Daily* reported Wednesday.

The bust was the largest in several years, a Beijing police spokesman told the newspaper.

Officers from the Xuanwu district police station got tipped off by a drug addict in January this year that local man Wei Hongbin was holding large quantities of illegal drugs.

After months of investigations, the police got a break in September, when they learned that Wei, 40, regularly travelled to the town of Nabang in Yunnan Province to meet with a lumber businessman from Shanxi named Liu Wen'an and his son, Wang Shengfeng, the newspaper said.

"We decided to see who would contact Liu," Fu Zhenhua, deputy director of the Beijing Public Security Bureau was quoted as saying by the *Beijing Evening News* on Thursday. In Yunnan, a short Burmese woman who appeared to be in her 60s drew the attention of the police, as she visited Liu twice, arriving carrying nothing, but leaving an October 2 meeting with a bulging bag in her hands. Two days later, Liu and his son personally transported some of their wood floorboard to Shanxi, and on October 11, Wei went to their home for a one-day stay.

"We believed Wei had got the drugs from Liu and we made a plan to catch him when he tried to sell the drugs," Fu was quoted as saying. The actual bust occurred on October 16 in Beijing when Wei tried to deal the drugs to an unidentified woman, the newspaper said. Police officers in Shanxi captured Liu and his son at almost the same time.

Liu later told police that he had gone bankrupt two years before and then got wrapped up in Wei's drug trafficking operation. "I dragged my son into trafficking drugs, and now he's going to prison. I would die to keep him out of it now, because my granddaughter will need her father," he confessed on record, according to *Beijing Youth Daily*.

To receive a reduced sentence, Liu named the old Burmese woman as the source of the drugs. Following that lead, local police headed back to Yunnan and arrested the woman and two of her children also involved in the drug smuggling operation.



Photo by Yu Jia

Foreigners Weigh In on Community Policing

including 210 foreigners, mostly Eastern Europeans involved in the garment trade.

"We invited these foreign residents to the meeting to give them a better idea of the security sit-

uation in the community and to get their suggestions for improving our work," said station chief Fu Wenguang.

"Once, a community policeman stopped me on the street and told me that I should not carry so much cash with me," Ivane Petrova Uria, who sells clothing at a store on Yabao Lu, said at the meeting. "At first, I thought he was asking for money, but after a few minutes, I realized he was trying to give me advice."

Uria gave the police a high approval rating, but had one suggestion: "I wish they could speak some Russian."

Thieves Beware!



Gu Jun adds bike locks to his graphic warning.

Photo by Tao Chan

outnumbered and unable to contact the police, he allowed them to go without a fight with the caveat that they leave behind their shoes, belts and a black coat. The next day, he hung the clothes on the wall of building in the neighborhood after writing the character for "thief" large across the back of the coat.

Tian Xiaoqiong, a professor at Central University of Nationalities said regular people should rely on their police to solve crimes and not take the law into their own hands. Tian called Gu's actions improper and a violation of the thieves' personal rights, but acknowledged Gu was in a precarious situation and left with little resort as he could not reach the police.

Two weeks ago, Gu was woken late at night by noises outside his home and went out to discover two thieves. He managed to corner them in a one-way alley, but because he was

A resident of the Fangyuanli community in Chaoyang District posted an unusual warning to would-be bike thieves planning on raiding his neighborhood — he hung clothes taken from two robbers on the community's gate along with a sign reading "This is the end, bike thieves. Come back if you have the guts!"

Bike theft had long been rampant in the area, but not a single bike has disappeared in the two weeks since Gu Jun, 38, hung his threat.

"Our area has no guards, and residents' bikes used to get stolen all the time, about one every two or three days. Eight disappeared in one bad day earlier this year," Gu said.

Rewards Offered for Clues to Dumpster Disappearances

By Zhang Hongjie

Anyone who provides clues that lead directly to the capture of the people behind a recent rash of thefts of valuable steel dumpsters can get up to 5,000 yuan in rewards from the containers' producer and the Xicheng District environment protection administration.

A company representative told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Tuesday that the cash rewards might be the only way to stem the disappearances of the dumpsters, which cost 4,000 yuan each to produce. In the past two months,

20 of the 100-kilogram containers have disappeared from positions around town in the deep night.

Three were stolen on Monday night alone from a site on the West Second Ring Road near Children's Hospital.

A Mr. Zhang told the newspaper that in the space of two months, 50,000 yuan worth of dumpsters had disappeared in the area between Fuxingmen and Maweqou along the West Second Ring Road.

Company employees working undercover had already starting

looking for clues at local waste recycling stations, the report said.

They found disassembled stainless steel plates at some stations, while others were so lazy that they had bought whole, intact dumpsters.

Zhu Gongwei, a lawyer at the Zhongzhao Law Office, told *Beijing Youth Daily* that dumpsters were public environmental protection facilities that should not be purchased by waste recycling stations without first clearly identifying the source. Stations that failed to do so could be fined, Zhu said.

Junen Calcium Tablets Proven Safe

By Wang Fang

range," the ministry's post-examination report concluded.

"We hope that society and the media will be more rational in supervising health products in the interest of protecting consumers in the future," Junen said in a statement posted on its website after the release of the ministry findings. The company had not taken any legal action towards *Henan Shangbao* over the events, CCTV said.

By Saturday, some pharmacies in Beijing and Shanghai resumed sales of Junen calcium tablets, but others were slow to follow suit for fear of poor consumer response, *China Youth Daily* reported.

"Sales of Junen calcium tablets dropped dramatically after the article was printed and news of the report spread among consumers," Yang Yicheng, owner of the Shanghai Shimin Drug Store was quoted as saying. "But sales have started to recover a bit. We have sold a total of 15 boxes in the past two days."

Perpetrators of Xi'an Lottery Fraud Behind Bars

By Dong Nan

The 12 suspects in the sports lottery fraud case in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province that made headlines nationwide in March were pronounced guilty by the Xi'an Intermediate People's Court last Friday and sentenced to terms in prison and fines.

Six of the convicted are former officials from local lottery administrative bodies and the others private businessmen. Six of the convicted are former officials from local lottery administrative bodies and the others private businessmen.

Jia Anqing, 58, former director of the Shaanxi Province Sports Lottery Administrative Center, was given 13 years imprisonment for accepting bribes and abuse of power and fined 130,000 yuan.

The five other officials from the Shaanxi and Xi'an sport lottery administrations were also convicted on bribery and malfeasance charges and sentenced to jail terms of six months to 11 years.

The stiffest sentence went to Yang Yongming, 32, a private businessman and former contracted ticket seller for the Shaanxi Provincial Sports Lottery Administration Center, who was fined 100,000 yuan and given 19 years in jail for fraud and bribery. Five of Yang's former employees received fixed-term prison sentences and had the proceeds of their fraud confiscated.

The scam was uncovered by accident earlier this year when farmer Liu Liang was mistakenly given a ticket for a top prize. Yang had planned to hand out the grand prizes of a BMW sedan and 120,000 yuan to four co-conspirators by marking the winning envelopes in Xi'an March lottery drawing.

But when Liu was denied his prize on the false claim that his ticket was forged, he unwittingly brought Yang and the other conspirators to light by climbing atop a 10-meter-high billboard near the lottery center and proclaiming his innocence, as *Beijing Today* reported on June 6.

Police arrived and started looking into the matter. Yang, Jia and the 10 others were arrested later in June.



Yang Yongming leads the convicts out of court after the judgement last Friday.

Photo by Photocome

Ancient Jade Traded at Auction

By Liu Zhaoxi

In 1995, Lin donated 70 pieces to museums in Beijing and Shenzhen before recently deciding to auction off the rest. Lin, 61, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the starting prices at the auction were very low. "I'm not doing this as a business move, I just want to make friends with fellow jade lovers and make sure these jade relics stay in China," he said.

But not everyone was impressed. "I'm from Hongshan and I know Hongshan jade very well. I could tell at first sight that the jade eagle was a fake," a visitor who only identified himself as a government official from Inner Mongolia said at the auction's preview show on Tuesday.

The treasures were once held in the US by a Chinese collector who, before he passed away, sold them to Taiwanese businessman Lin-guo Lin, a press release from auction company said. Since

Farm Woman Right to Fight for Migrant Workers?

By Liu Zhaoxi

China Central Television made Xiong Deming, a farm woman from Yunyang County, Chongqing Municipality, a national star this week, as several shows focused on her five-day trip to Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province to help some migrant workers receive compensation for work-related illnesses.

Even before the shows, the frank-talking Xiong, 42, was well known among migrant workers across the country. Last year, when Premier Wen Jiabao inspected her village, Xiong boldly told him that her husband was still owed one year's salary after a period of employment as a migrant worker. Once news of her candor spread, migrant workers from around China started arriving at her doorstep hoping she could help them claim unpaid wages.

Swamped by help-seekers, Xiong left home in March and tried to find peace and quiet through a job at a company in Chongqing. But eight months later, she decided she did not like urban life and resigned.

Not long after she returned home, Xiong learned her cousin and some other people from the town had developed serious lung ailments from breathing toxic dust while working in pottery factories in Wenzhou, but their employer refused to pay compensation.

She decided to take action. On November 30, she dropped her job at a pig farm, bought a plane ticket and flew to Wenzhou to take up the migrant workers' cause.

Local government officials, who questioned whether Xiong was legally qualified to represent the workers, said it would take at least 200 days to settle the compensation claim. But during her short tour, she managed to secure payment for two of the stricken migrants.

Then rumors started to swirl that Xiong had taken money from the people she went to represent, charges Xiong has vehemently denied. There have also been more questions about whether Xiong, who has no legal expertise, was right to use her fame to defend the workers' rights.

On Saturday, Xiong left Wenzhou for Beijing to shoot the CCTV shows. She told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that she had just received a phone call saying her cousin had been given some compensation for his illness.

Who is Xiong, what are her motives and what are the possible effects of her actions? These are subjects of discussion among many people, including Xiong herself, from across the nation.



"Although there were some setbacks in the process, I still helped two workers and my cousin to get compensation" – Xiong Deming

Photo by Shi Tao



Wen Jiabao and Xiong Deming

Photo by Liu Weibing

Xiong Deming: I learned something from the trip

Although there were some setbacks in the process, I still helped two workers and my cousin to get compensation. The quarrels with some media hurt me personally, but, in the end, I'm glad I was able to defend the rights of migrant workers. I also learned something from this trip. In the future, if I do this again, I will consult with experts, legal consul and local labor administrators before setting out.

Du Yang, researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: Xiong did nothing wrong

It is not necessary to judge whether Xiong Deming's actions were right or wrong. Her going

out to ask for compensation for her relatives and townspeople was absolutely fine. The people who caused the workers' lung ailments should be denounced and punished, not Xiong. The public and the media should support her. Disputes (over compensation) should not happen in the first place. When they do happen, migrant workers try all means at their disposal to defend their rights, and those means should not be ridiculed. Local governments around China are facing problems regarding the labor market, including guaranteeing the safety and basic social security of migrant workers. Those are problems that must be solved – failure to do so could lead to labor shortages, which would do great damage to the economy.

Zhou Xihong, lawyer at Beijing Huiyuan law firm: Defending migrant workers' rights is difficult

There are several obstacles to defending migrant workers' rights in cases of violations. One is that it is hard to get evidence to prove employment, since many migrant workers do not sign contracts with their employers. Another is that the legal procedures

are complicated and it takes a long time for the cases to be resolved. I think the design of these procedures is not fair to migrant workers. There are many ways to settle disputes, and Xiong's use of her fame and media influence is certainly one. If such an approach can solve problems, I think it should be supported.

Yang Xia, migrant worker from Hunan: Solving these problems will take government action

Of course we migrant workers are grateful for what Xiong has done and we hope there will be more people like her, but she is not as effective as real governance in solving this problem. What she has done is remarkable, but some bosses will not turn over money just because they're facing a celebrity. She cannot solve the basic problems faced by the majority of migrant workers – that will take government action. If the government did a good job overseeing the working conditions at those factories, the workers would not have gotten sick in the first place.

Ding Zhi, psychologist: Xiong undertook more than she could handle

People and the media have made Xiong into a 'savior' character and she seems to have come to unconsciously view herself that way. That overgrown sense of responsibility led her to undertake more than she could actually do or handle.

(From the *Chongqing Times*)

Gu Xiaoming, professor at Fudan University: Individual spirit can overcome problems in procedure

From a social or cultural standpoint, Xiong Deming's compensation campaign was like Arnold Schwarzenegger's becoming governor of a US state. Discussions of whether her behavior was effective or not are actually discussions of which is more powerful: the individual or the government. In any society, government procedures and measures, no matter how well formulated, can never completely prevent problems from occurring. But the spirit of the human individual can overcome problems caused by the rigidity of procedures.

For instance, Xiong Deming's actions attracted public attention to the problem of many companies defaulting on payments to migrant workers and, through media coverage, put pressure on companies guilty of owing back-pay. Government bodies or measures are incapable of producing similar effects in so short a time.

(From the *Beijing Times*)

price cuts of 25 to 50 percent, leading in some cases to job losses, cutbacks and even closings.

"We're brought up on rubbish and, as parents, we give our children rubbish to eat," Deborah Ski, a local resident in Glasgow, said as to why Scotland had got a reputation as "the sick man of Europe".

A 2004 study by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found that from 1991 to 1995, the mortality rate in Scotland due to all causes was the worst in Western Europe among people of working age. In a chart that ranked Scotland among 17 Western European nations, the country led in heart disease deaths from 1991 to 1995, the most recent comparable figures available, and came in second for stroke and lung cancer deaths.

Scotland has also recently taken steps to fight obesity, particularly among children. Last year, it greatly increased financing for lunches at schools, most of which dole out atrocious fried meals, soft drinks and junk food. A number of schools now offer more fruits and vegetables, although getting the children to eat them is another matter.



Foreign tourists visiting the Ming Tombs

Commentary

Taking an Objective Look at China as "the Best"

China has been appraised by the World Tourist Organization (WTO) as the world's best tourist destination for the year of 2004. In the past 10 months, the number of tourists inbound to and outbound from China set world records.

Inbound tourists are expected to overtake 105 million per year in turnstile count with foreign exchange income from tourism should exceed \$225 million, undoubtedly a piece of very heartening news.

However, we have to take an objective and dialectic look at China's best being assessed as the best tourist destination in the world. That appraisal depends largely on the referential quota of a country (or a region) and the numbers of arrivals that year. In other words, China has been awarded the title of the best tourist destination because this year has witnessed a great number of tourist arrivals in China and rapid increase in those numbers.

However, this does not mean China's tourism industry is the world's best from an overall standpoint. Why and how could China attract so many tourists to come here for sightseeing? There are three major reasons.

China is a big country with abundant products and features a long history of civilization. On the Chinese soil there are rich and varied cultural attractions and landscapes appealing to numerous tourists from around the world.

Second is that China, though opened as a country to the outside world for 25 years, is still a place most people of the world are far from acquainted with and a place in the process of changing in the eyes of foreign tourists, giving it a sense of mystery and charm.

Third is that the world has been in an unstable

All this shows that efforts must be made to enhance tourism service quality and to develop the tourism market. China still has a long way to go before it is really the world's best venue for tourism.

We should see the great numbers of tourists swarming to China as good opportunities to dig deep into tourism resources, ceaselessly work to raise service standards,

and make the tourism industry a pivotal part of the national economy to truly help China earn the title of the world's best tourist destination.

(*People's Daily*)

Soundbites

"The attacks in Saudi Arabia remind us that the terrorists are still on the move. They want us to leave Saudi Arabia and they want us to leave Iraq," US President George Bush said from the White House's Oval Office on Monday.

After meeting with Ghazi al-Yawer, the interim Iraqi president, Bush addressed the terrorist attack on the US Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Tuesday in which at least five consular employees and four attackers were killed. A Saudi group linked to al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack, in which Islamic militants hurled explosives at the heavily guarded compound and forced their way inside before they were killed or captured, but the US government has not confirmed the claim. Bush thanked Saudi Arabia for helping put down the threat and said the US would do everything it could to make Iraq's approaching elections as safe as possible.

"By that time, we can tell them (China), 'Congratulations on your graduation!' It is necessary to achieve a soft-landing on a basis that can be accepted by

both sides," said former Japanese foreign minister Komura Masahiko on Monday.

In a speech in Fukuoka, Masahiko proposed Japan only continue to provide official development assistance (ODA) to China until 2010. On November 28, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi hinted that Japan would likely stop financial assistance of China while at the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea held in Vientiane, Laos.

"(German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder) and his government will strive for a consensus to be reached as early as possible among EU countries on the issue of lifting weapons sanctions against China. He said this when he visited China the last time in December 2003 and again when Premier Wen Jiabao visited Germany this May," said Dr. Volker Stanzel, German ambassador to China in an interview with Oriental Outlook magazine on Monday.

Chancellor Schroeder arrived in China on Monday for a three-day visit. While the arms ban was a major focus of talk during the trip, an excursion to China's in-

dustrial northeastern region led to widespread speculation that Germany was ready to engage strongly in China's economic development. Schroeder and a large German business delegation held talks with the governors of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces on how to revitalize their flagging industries, particularly the automotive and manufacturing sectors.

"When I saw that, I said, 'That can't be right,' and I went back to the economics guys," Michael R. P. Smith, chief executive of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation told the *New York Times* on Tuesday. Smith was startled when his staff recently projected that in 2034, bank assets in China would surpass those in the United States. Their research found that from steel to oil to cars to credit cards, China was poised to become the world's biggest producer and market for many goods and services. The research implies that companies across many industries and countries are facing enormous pressure to match prices that are available in China or lose their customers, which can mean deep



The Imperial Palace



At Beijing's large hospitals such as Tongji, Tiantan and Tongren, long queues form to see doctors every day
Photo by Photocome

Survey Exposes System Overload

Soaring medical costs frightening off patients

Expensive drugs

Large hospital income increased 66.4% from 1998 to 2003, according to the survey. Patients complaints also increased. Most complaints focused on the high costs of medical care.

Yang Yang, a Beijing patient with an infected leg, went to Luhe Hospital last month, where the doctor took a couple of minutes to examine his wound and then wrote out several prescriptions worth some 300 yuan. But later he found the antibiotic which cost 40 yuan at the hospital cost 30 yuan at his local drugstore.

"Most hospitals and doctors receive 'allowances' from medicine producers," a doctor in Luhe Hospital who would not publish his name told *Beijing Today*. "As doctors prescribe medicines produced by those producers, they can deduct some money from the profit."

"It is an open secret and everyone is doing it. But generally, such things are hard to prove. To pursue more profit, hospitals tend to price medicines higher."

The doctor pointed out the unusually low salary of doctors might be one reason why so many receive this "allowance". His own salary was less than 3,000 yuan per month.

In June, *Beijing Today* reported the story of employees fired at MSD (Merck) Medicine, a US pharmaceutical corporation, for bribing doctors.

"MSD held various 'academic seminars', which gathered doctors and introduced them to new MSD medicines. During those seminars, MSD paid various allowances and presents to doctors and give 'sponsorship fees' to hospitals. These are all methods to bribe doctors into buying MSD medicine," said a fired employee who would not reveal his name.

Access

At Beijing's large hospitals such as Tongji, Tiantan and Tongren, long queues form to see doctors every day.

Some even sleep outside the hospital doorways in their quilts. Some people make a tidy living by queuing on behalf of other patients and charging for the service.

Ms. Ye, a manager of Xiehe Hospital, said there are too many patients, not enough doctors. She said every day there are about 4,000-5,000 patients, many seeking specialist treatment. But there are only 100 specialists available each day. Some never take lunch.

"It's easy to add more equipment or improve the conditions of medical care, but it's hard to add to the number of expert doctors over the years," she told *Beijing Today*.

The survey also found 25.7% of city patients and 53.5% of rural patients went to hospitals in the communities and villages. The rest preferred to go to large hospitals. This burdens the larger hospitals and wastes community and village hospital resources.

But in some impoverished areas, there are no hospitals; in one such area, 18% of families did not have a hospital within five kilometers, and 25% had to travel more than 30 minutes to nearest hospital.

Rural areas

The survey found there are still many health and sanitation issues in rural areas. For example, in cities, 96% of families use tap water. That number was 34% in rural areas. A further 43% used sanitized well-water. The remaining 23% still used unclean water. Most of these users lived in depressed areas. And in rural areas, 70% of families were still using an unsanitary toilet.

Perhaps the most important statistic of all is that 79.1% of people living in rural areas do not have medical insurance.

"Most peasants rely on the family to cover the costs of medical care," said Li Weiping a professor of China Academy of Health Policy at Beijing University to *Beijing Today*. "And the family will be more willing to spend money on kids and the main labor force of the family and ignore senior people."

According to his research in Wenxi Town, Shanxi, many peasants do not have a sense of risk and are unwilling to participate in medical insurance. Most families thought insurance premiums were expensive, and they were able to pay 10-30 yuan a year at most on medical insurance. They worried that insurance premiums would only end up in the pockets of village or town officials.

Survey information

The survey was conducted by the Ministry of Public Health of China, and based on 57,000 families or 200,000 people across the whole country.

Top 10 Legal Champions of 2004

By Zhou Ying

CCTV, with the joint effort of the Propaganda Ministry of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Ministry of Justice, announced the top 10 legal battlers of the year last Saturday, the national day for publicizing law.

The 10 were selected from 20 nominees by a panel of judges that included professors, lawyers and laymen.

Zhang Xianzhu



Zhang Xianzhu



Gao Zheng



Wu Guanglin



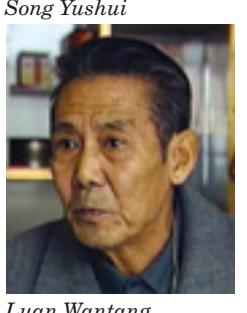
Wu Gaohan, secretary general of China Consumers' Association



Xie Jia



Song Yushui



Luan Wantang



Zhang Xingguo



Cao Fagui



Xu Chongde

By Zhou Ying

Zhang, 25, from Wuhu, Anhui Province, is a Hepatitis B virus (HBV) carrier who sued the Personnel Affairs Bureau of Wuhu in East China's Anhui Province in October 2003 after being rejected for a civil servant position last year.

Nearly 120 million HBV carriers like Zhang are confronted by discrimination entering school, finding jobs or making friends in daily life. Zhang hopes his case will draw public attention to the issue. It is the first case in China involving the rights of a Hepatitis B virus (HBV) carrier.

In April this year, the court gave Hepatitis B carriers a victory while saying the local government was wrong to discriminate against Zhang. As a result, some governments including Zhejiang, Sichuan, Fujian, Guangdong and Hunan Provinces have allowed departments to employ HBV carriers whose infectiousness is so weak that common daily contact poses no risk.

Gao Zheng

Gao, 30, a farmer from Fuyang, Anhui Province, is the father of what has sadly become known as a "big head baby". He paid for an examination of powdered milk, handing the evidence to government departments. Finally, his weak voice stirred the whole country and the issue of Fuyang fake milk powder was exposed to the public.

Since then, 55 brands of milk powder have proven to be fake and 42 cases relating to the sale of fake milk powder have been executed. More than 40 companies from ten provinces have been shut down and 47 suspects arrested.

Wu Guanglin

Since November 2002, Wu Guanglin, deputy captain of the anti-drug team of the public security bureau in Fengqing County, Licang District in Yunnan Province, has been involved in cracking 152 criminal drug cases, arresting 275 suspects and the capture of more than 550 kilograms of heroin, worth 4 million yuan. But Wu died on August 30 this year protecting his colleagues in a fight with criminals. He was 35.

Most of China's drug trade comes through Yunnan Province, of which 90 percent passes through Lincang, Dehong and Simao cities in Yunnan.

China Consumers' Association

China Consumers' Association released a series of reports to the public on telecommunications, real estate, banking, automobiles and tourism. The announcement has compelled some industries to make changes.

Xie Jia

As director of the Anti-corruption Bureau of Gulou Municipal People's Procuratorate, in Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province in 1998, he has judged 151 cases, involving four corruption cases in excess of one million yuan each.

Song Yushui

Song started her work as a judge with the Haidian District People's Court in Beijing, where she handles business disputes. Haidian District has many of the city's universities and high-tech businesses and so, not unnaturally, the district has a great many legal cases involving businesses. Song delves deep into every case that comes before her to collect evidence and proof. Her investigations often take her across the length and breadth of the country.

Since she joined the court, Song has presided over about 1,200 business cases, among which 300 cases were extremely complex.

Luan Wantang

Luan, 72, worked as a financial advisor at the Provincial Sports Lottery Administration Centre in Shaanxi Province from 1995 to 2000. After noticing that some leaders of the center had colluded with the contractors to cheat the public, he began to collect evidence in 1996, finally handing it over to the authorities. His evidence played a key role in exposure of the Xi'an lottery fraud.

Zhang Xingguo

Zhang Xingguo, a certified top chef, led hundreds of local chefs to sign their names on a declaration in Calabash Island City (Huludao), Liaoning Province in 2003, vowing not to cook wildlife all through their career as chefs.

Zhang has been fired 12 times, and quit jobs more than 20 times due to his refusal to cook wildlife over the past eight years. He still holds his ground.

Cao Fagui

Cao, 47, director of the public mediation committee in Huangba village of Wujiang county, Anhui Province was killed by a criminal on May 16 this year trying to intervene to save an injured villager's life.

The public mediation committee is an organization special to China that aims to arbitrate in sensitive disputes. He had resolved more than 2,000 cases.

Xu Chongde

Xu Chongde, a professor of the People's University of China and a former member of the Committee for Drafting Basic Law of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), has been a teacher for 50 years.

As a trustee and honored chairman of China Law Society and deputy chairman of Center for Comparative Constitutional Law Studies, Xu has witnessed every step of legal construction.

By Wang Fang

A dreadful landslide engulfed much of a remote village in Nayong County, southwest China's Guizhou Province within two minutes as people slept on Friday.

The huge mass of earth falling from the mountain destroyed 25 houses. The death toll of the disaster rose to 39 on Tuesday with five still missing. The rescuers said the chances of their survival are slim, reported Xinhua news agency.

Many survivors blamed mining under the mountain where the village is located as the cause of the disaster, while official experts concluded that the landslide was due to natural factors.

Dark, deadly night

The disaster, the latest to hit China after a series of recent tragic accidents, struck at three in the morning in mountainous Zuojiaying village in Nayong county, Guizhou province.

Xinhua news agency said Saturday 108 people were sleeping in their houses at the time. "When we first got there, we were told that 47 people were buried and 12 were injured," Guo Yan, director of the county civil affairs bureau, told CCTV 1 Monday. The number of buried people was later changed to 44 by the county government.

The landslide that crashed down on the houses was 500 meters long, 200 meters wide and three meters high, Guo Yan said.

Village chief Zuo Gongqiang said by mobile phone to CCTV 1 Monday that the situation was "very serious." He said: "Entire families are buried. The area is completely covered in mud. You can't even see the roofs of the

Landslide Wipes Out Village

Whole families buried alive as mountain collapses



The local government has set up a tent city for survivors.

Xinhua Photo

"They were holding their children tightly and one of them had put the child under her body to allow some breathing room. Rocks lay across the mother's back."

houses. Many relatives were crying and were digging at the dirt with their bare hands trying to find survivors."

One survivor

Zuo Guangxing, trapped in a collapsed house for more than six hours, was rescued and sent to Nayong Chinese Medicine Hos-

pital. The doctor was surprised to find he had only broken his ankle.

Zuo told CCTV 1 Monday: "My wife woke me up, saying 'The mountain is falling!' In a second, we were buried by falling earth. I called 'help!' loudly, but no one heard. I don't know how long passed until I heard somebody say, 'Look, there is a man!' And then I was pulled out."

In tears, he said: "Twenty-eight people including my wife, children and my two uncles' families are dead. I am the only one left."

Wang Yan, another survivor, told CCTV 1 Monday that Friday night was a "true nightmare". Only seven out of 12 people in her family escaped death.

She told CCTV 1: "When I heard that roaring of the mountain, I held up my boy and ran to the door barefoot. However, just at that time, the roof fell down on us."

"The beam hit my leg and I could not move to push my boy out of the debris," Wang said. But four villagers ran to her, prizing the beam up by using two steel girders. She and her son, whose name was not reported, were sent to Nayong Chinese Medicine Hospital where she was reunited with her father, also unnamed.

"We hadn't heard anything of my family for more than three



Thirty-nine people were reported dead at presstime, with five missing.

Photos by Photocome

hours," she said. Later she was told her elder brother's family — two adults and three children — were all dead. "If I could give my life to bring back my three cousins, I would willingly do that," said Wang.

Zuo Dihua, 25, and girlfriend Chen Zhu were the only two survivors in his family. His parents, his aunt, his aunt's three children, his sister-in-law, his sister and his sister's child all died.

"I was sleeping and did not know what had happened," he said. He told Beijing News Tuesday that he heard his mother calling his name under the rocks and mud. When he came to drag her out, a rock fell exactly on the place from where his mother had called him a second ago. "He passed out afterwards, yelling, 'Mother!'" said his girlfriend.

We searched for survivors'
"Dogs were barking, pigs were

running and villagers were scurrying in all directions," He Qiang, a rescuer who reached the village at 5:10 am, two hours after the disaster, told Beijing News on Tuesday.

"I have never experienced such a horrible night in 15 years working in the county firefighting branch," he said. "It was completely dark with heavy fog. We could only see things within 10 meters. The mud and rock was still falling from the mountain."

He and his co-workers found the first victim about 2:30 pm on Friday. "We didn't have enough equipment and so we had to search for survivors from one house to another. And the landslide filled every tiny crack of the house with earth, cutting off air from buried villagers."

He told Beijing News about two dead female victims he dug out. "They were holding their children tightly and one of them had put the child under her body to allow some breathing room. Rocks lay across the mother's back."

Possible causes

"It's not clear why the collapse happened, but it is certainly not because of the weather. The weather was very good," a Nayong county official surnamed Zhang told Xinhua on Monday.

Village chief Zuo Gongqiang, however, immediately suspected the area's mines. "It's because of coal mining ... we were planning to relocate the villagers in coming days because many of the houses had cracks running up their walls and were unstable because of the mining underground," Zuo Gongqiang told Beijing News Tuesday. "The landslide unfortunately happened before the relocation."

Guo Yan, director of the county civil affairs bureau, confirmed Monday to CCTV 1 that four mines, including a large one, were located under the site of the landslide. "More than 20 mines operate in the mountains where the village is located," he said.

But preliminary investigation by official experts on Saturday attributed the landslide to natural causes. Jiang Jianjun, a researcher with the National Resource and Land Bureau told Xinhua news agency, "The mountain had got a huge crack before the landslide and the growth of plants' roots made the crack wider and wider over the years. The rock is also weathered."

A disaster relief fund of 83,000 yuan has been allocated to Nayong County. The local government has put up 109 tents for 346 people in the landslide area. Food, heating, water and light have been brought over by the local government, China Radio International reported Tuesday.

Chinese leaders including President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao urged local governments and departments to rescue the victims of the landslide, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday.

Exposed: Lust of a Lady Police Chief

Corrupt public security director promoted prostitution, handsome policemen

By Zhou Ying

The most serious political scandal in the modern history of Shenzhen has begun to be unveiled through the arrest of the director of a public security bureau on October 8.

An Huijun, 48-year-old director of the Luohu Branch of Shenzhen Public Security Bureau in Guangdong Province, stands accused of bribery and supporting a protection racket for local prostitution services.

The verdict of the Shenzhen provincial people's procurator is expected at the beginning of next year. Moreover, a further 20 police officers have already been questioned by the local disciplinary inspection department, of whom seven have been arrested.

Located in the eastern part of the Special Economic Zone, bordered by Futian District to the west and Hong Kong to the south, Luohu District's unique position lends itself to a flourishing black economy that tests incorruptibility of any official to the limits.

An is not the first director of the Luohu public security bureau to be involved in a corruption scandal. She follows in the footsteps of Peng Hu, arrested on February 28 in 2000.

Tragedy

An anonymous official from Shenzhen disciplinary inspection committee told Beijing News last month that An Huijun's arrest could all be traced back to a deadly landslide disaster in August this year.

According to a Shenzhen-based *Information Times* report of September 2, a wall collapsed after the landslide in Changpai village, Longyan district, Shenzhen Province, killing a mother and child on August 31.

The following investigation found that illegal construction in the surrounding area that had caused the landslide. The illegal construction had something to do with the director of the local public security bureau.

According to the Beijing News Monday report, seven



An Huijun

Bribes pay for reform

The committee received an anonymous letter from a local police station at the beginning of this year suggesting An had profited from police reform in Shenzhen: the integration of local police stations in Shenzhen in 2002. The total number of local police stations was reduced from 185 to 103, with 25 police stations reduced to eight in Luohu.

A local policeman told Beijing News that Luohu police officers bribed An Huijun in order to retain their positions and win promotions.

The three mentioned represented only the tip of the iceberg. According to the Beijing News, An made more than 10 million yuan. The team said they are now investigating the exact amount, and refused to reveal more details.

Moreover, a member of the investigation team from the Shenzhen disciplinary inspection committee revealed to the Beijing News that they had found An was also a protecting a local public prostitution and entertainment establishments. The committee found more than 130 large nightclubs, with thousands of small dancing and

Singing halls in Luohu district

The boss of one club revealed to the Beijing News on condition of anonymity that the police from Luohu Branch of Shenzhen Public Security Bureau would collect monthly "protection money" ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 yuan from nightclub managers. "Some even acted as our legal advisers," he said.

Centralization

After becoming director of the Luohu Public Security Bureau in 1998, An Huijun began to centralize her power. With the launch of the financial administration center of the Luohu Branch of Public Security Bureau on December 29 in 2000, the financial affairs of all local police stations in Luohu district moved under the complete financial control of the central branch. Fifty-three police stations lost the right to manage their own finances.

Nearly all the Shenzhen-based newspapers commented at that time that the launch of centralized financing made a Shenzhen a role model for the whole province.

"By doing this, she not only made a good image for herself, but also she weakened all 53 police stations in Luohu district through the loss of financing rights," said a source from Luohu Branch of Public Security Bureau.

But she did not conduct a strict audit on the former financial situation of the local police before the merger and streamlining. Some heads of local police stations had embezzled much public money, such as the three mentioned above, who asked not to be named.

"Most of the money was used to bribe An, and so she did not conduct investigation of the embezzlement issue at all," the policeman said.

Sex crime

The Beijing News reported that nearly anyone with power in Luohu district knew that An had divorced in 1991 over an affair with a high-ranking official from the Shenzhen Public Se-

curity Bureau.

A retired policeman from the Committee of Political Science and Law in Luohu district told the Beijing News that it took just three years for An to be promoted to directorship from her position as an ordinary office clerk. "It was just like there was a hand behind her secretly pushing," he said.

According to the investigation, An Huijun regularly took young and handsome policemen out alone with her, ostensibly for investigation, but would then make sexual innuendoes towards them.

"Those who met her requirements could gain rapid promotion after they returned," he said.

A novel entitled "Sui Feng Piao Yang" (Swaying with the Wind), written by an official of the Luohu Branch of Shenzhen Public Security Bureau, was published in 2000. The contents were believed to describe the private life of An and even now, the book supplies important clues for further investigation.

Ways to wealth

Guangdong Provincial Disciplinary Inspection Committee under the CPC Central Committee held a meeting at the end of October, revealing that they are investigating and prosecuting a case involving officials in the political and legal system.

The investigators revealed there are two unique ways for police to accumulate wealth in the coastal cities: First is to accept bribes for releasing registration licenses for car smuggling. Another is to take bribes for allowing people to leave the country illegally.

According to the Beijing News report, Luohu district, located in the east part of Shenzhen city, is the center of trade, finance and the information industry. "Even a head of a local police station can make as much as 10,000 yuan annually by receiving bribes, let alone the director of the public security bureau," the reporter told Beijing Today on Tuesday.

A report from Nanfang Daily last month found Shenzhen public security bureau has begun to research innovation and reform of the public security system at the beginning of this year, trying to set up a special audit and investigation system.

A Passion for Junk

Old letters and manuscripts, discarded books and paving stones are all potential treasures for this dedicated collector

By Hester Xu and Arron Chang

Zhao Qingwei held an exhibition of manuscripts by Asian art masters at the Beijing Hotel in late October. Zhao also owns the Jiucai Gallery in the hotel.

Many people take him for a junk dealer, an impression he doesn't bother to correct. "If only they can get some inspiration from those treasures they call junk and learn to keep them well, it would be a great contribution to both our ancestors and descendants," Zhao told *Beijing Today*.

Gripping a large Qing Dynasty rosewood steelyard, a pair of small eyes behind frameless glasses sweeping over junk loaded tricycles passing by, Zhao strolls near a recycled goods yard near the Asian Games Center in the north of Beijing. From time to time, his thoughtful gaze gives way to a glint of pure excitement. A tuft of irregular shaped beard on his chin, which seems to have remained untrimmed for some time, is the only hint of unruliness.

Worker turned stamp dealer

Born in 1963 under the Chinese zodiac sign of the rabbit, Zhao Qingwei loves to talk about his childhood, with a cigarette clamped between his lips. Inhaling a mouthful of smoke and puffing slowly, he narrows his eyes and looks extremely contented.

He attributes his prowess as a collector and shrewdness in doing business to his genes, claiming that he inherited his skill from his father who was awarded a military merit medal, third grade, for showing wisdom and courage on the battlefield during the Korean War.

Zhao passed the entrance examinations for college in 1980 and was admitted to Shijiazhuang Senior School of Infantry. Being too wild to put up with strict discipline of military life, he soon dropped out, telling his parents he would go to a better school the next year.

When he was admitted into a technical secondary school a year later, he again quit, keen to avoid suspicion he had benefitted from the influence of his mother, who was party committee secretary of the factory to which the school attached. The third year saw him take another step backward when he was admitted to a technical school for the training of common workers, which he happily attended.

Zhao describes himself as tak-

ing one step down the ladder each year. While other people were striving to climb upwards, he backslid all the way from college to technical school. But he soon realized his advantage in attending a technical school: he was able to study with utmost ease while staying at the top of the class. He summed up his philosophy of life as, "People usually go upwards, but many of them have an ability unequal to their ambition, and have to quit eventually. If they give themselves a lesser goal that can be easily achieved with their ability, they will find it much easier to succeed and at the same time, make a lot of friends."

"If I had insisted on going to Tsinghua University, I must have studied to death by now," he chuckled. In 1985, after two years' study at the technical school, he was assigned to work as an apprentice worker in the Beijing Chunshu Rectifier Factory.

Working there for three years made his heart crave for change. He used to go to an old bookstore at nearby Liulichang to read during lunch break, and on his way he passed by the China Stamp Corporation, where he sometimes stopped to buy stamps for his elder sister. He easily made friends with the staff and occasionally interpreted for foreign customers.

It didn't take him long to realize that stamps were increasing in value, a simple transaction could make him a lot of money. Soon he began to visit the stamp market in Yuetan Park and got to know some stamp dealers there.

Zhao's career as a dealer-collector began one summer day in 1988 when a heavy rain drove several stamp dealers into a pool hall where he was playing. They agreed to sell all the stamps they hadn't managed to sell that day to Zhao, who happened to have 365 yuan in his pocket left from his wedding ceremony.

To ease his mind about making a reckless investment, they gave him two stamp catalogues published by China Stamp Corporation and told him to sell the stamps according to the price listed on them.

The next day, Zhao went to Liulichang and sold his stamps for a big profit. Seeing he could make a much better income through buying and selling stamps than working in the factory, he quit his job without a second thought.

Self-made treasure hunter

Zhao Qingwei never planned to make stamp dealing a real job. Soon after resigning from

the factory he went to the evening school of Beihang University to study electronics. He only attended a few classes but managed to pass all the examinations. At the end of 1989, he was invited by a friend to work as an engineer at a well known IT company in Zhongguancun. During the next three years, he juggled a regular job, his study at evening school and stamp dealing all at the same time.

In 1993, shortly after finishing his study, Zhao co-founded a small company called Kangfu Corporation as a technical partner with an investor. Often likening his partner to a big penguin with small wings and himself to a small seagull with big wings, he joked that together they would make an eagle with big body and strong wings that would take flight some day.

Their company thrived in a few years, and he sank all the money he made into the stamp market, turning stamp dealing into a serious investment. He says he built up his stamp dealing business as an emergency fallback, on which he could rely in case he needed cash urgently.

Zhao began to recognize the value of oil paintings in 1996 when he volunteered to redecorate the

company's office. He immediately changed his course to the more promising business of collecting paintings. To improve his knowledge of art, he began to read books, visit museums and art galleries and even go abroad to learn about collecting painting.

Although he describes himself as the forerunner of oil painting collectors in China, Zhao's collection is not confined to paintings. One of his most prized possessions is a small relief he bought from a demolished orthodox church in Harbin. He was so excited when he realized it was a sample made by Michelangelo in 1502 for a relief in the home temple of a famous Italian general.

Another opportunity beckoned to Zhao in 1999. One day he was handling some business affairs in Rongxing Art Gallery in Liulichang, where some of the old files were to be either reorganized or discarded. A staff member asked him offhandedly whether he wanted some manuscripts of renowned oil painter Ai Zhongxin. Recalling that he had bought paintings by Ai before, Zhao took the unwanted manuscripts home. By the end of that year, he had become totally immersed in "junk collecting." He quit the company and began sal-

vaging letters, scripts and all kinds of discarded goods in bulk from office buildings belonging to government organizations, ministries and committees, publishing houses, schools, hospitals, hutongs under demolition, junkyards and even paper mills.

In July 2004, Beijing Union Medical College Hospital began a renovation project. As one of China's earliest hospitals founded by a Christian church, the hospital had a large number of old books from the late Qing Dynasty to be disposed of. After hearing the news from a junk dealer working for the hospital, he managed to beat all his competitors and bought all the discarded goods at a price of 5 yuan per kilo.

That night, a truck delivered 100 woven plastic bags to his doorstep. From the 5,000 kilograms of goods, he retrieved some 3,500 books on medicine and philosophy, most of which dated back to the 1800s and had been donated by various overseas medical organizations.

"It is very unusual for such a large quantity of books on one specific subject to be found in China. Even more uncommon is that some of the books are stamped by the foreign organizations that donated them or come with ownership stamps, which make them even more valuable."

Smiling broadly, Zhao said,

"This is a big collection, I paid only 20,000 yuan to become a bibliophile for a specific category of books. When other book collectors in Beijing heard my story, they all told me that the haul could be worth more than a few dozen yuan per kilo, especially

when they heard that the collection contained books published as far back as in the 1600s. This is quite an event in our circle. Later, I donated about 1,000 books to the National Library and some to the Capital Library."

When the Commercial Press, one of the earliest publishing houses in China, moved in 2002, large quantities of manuscripts, books, blocks and collating scripts were thrown away. Originally

hoping to find manuscripts and correspondences by Lu Xun, Zhao Qingwei found works by other famous writers and painters instead, including illustrations created by the great painter and animator Wang Laiming in 1925 and letters from the famous writer Xiao Qian. Other interesting items included newspaper clippings of advertisements made by the Commercial Press and all meeting minutes accumulat-

ed over the years. Besides the six to seven hundred kilograms of manuscripts, Zhao also found five to six hundred kilograms of red copper blocks from the Qing Dynasty, carved with maps of Tibet and pictures of coins, plants and animals.

The latest acquisition in Zhao's collection is 800 Ming Dynasty grey bricks and three unearthed figures of Buddha he retrieved from a demolished house in Zhuanta Hutong once lived in by famous writer Zhang Henshui. He said he would rather use those bricks to pave his floor than to see them destroyed.

Describing his method as a strategy of "collecting everything," Zhao said he sees his collecting as building a second line of defence which leaves not only a fortune to his children but a lasting legacy to all.

True belief of a collector

Zhao admits that he didn't give any serious thought to what he was doing when he first began collecting, but when he started to realize the true value of his "junk," he began to save whatever he could with a sense of mission. When necessary, he finances his purchases by selling some of his stamps or oil paintings. To encourage himself to continue, Zhao wrote a couplet with the first and second line reading, "Small money buys all China's treasure; big steelyard weighs all masters' manuscripts."

Although he has made too many transactions to remember the details of all of them, Zhao can recite the exact weight and quantity of every purchase from a thick notebook in which he enters all the details.

After filling five warehouses and two containers, he had to close his bar in the residential community where he lives and turn it into a temporary warehouse. Zhao has no reservations about encouraging others to follow his practice, especially his neighbors. Many entrepreneurs and movie and TV stars living in the community have become members of his collector's club at Zhao's urging.

Talking about the future, Zhao raised his voice with renewed confidence. His buying spree will soon come to an end, as most of the major renovation projects in Beijing are now already underway, and then he will begin to sort things out. But what Zhao says he hopes for most of all is that more people will join him in collecting and preserving those neglected cultural relics before they are destroyed or discarded.



Zhao with some of his collection

In old times, Beijingers began to count the long chilly days by coloring in their shuijiu (Nine-Nine Cold-Removing Chart). According to the imperial records, on winter solstice, the court painter would sketch a branch of plum blossoms with 81 petals in total. From then on, one petal would be colored in every day. The coloring of the last one marked the arrival of spring.

The tradition later became popular among the common folk, evolving into various simplified forms along with a winter rhyme and other rich and colorful activities with which Beijingers entertained themselves through the long winter.



Ancient Capital Charm Lingers in Winter

Outdoor Amusements

To survive winter with health and sense of humor intact, Beijingers have come up with a variety of activities to keep themselves amused.

Ice-sledding

Wooden ice-sleds were used both for recreation and for transport in old Beijing. The sleds, usually two meters long and with iron strips underneath, could seat three to four people. So popular was ice sledding in old Beijing, it gave birth to the seasonal occupation of sled pulling, which created a poetic scene in the streets and lanes of the ancient capital.

Now the ice-sleds have long gone, thanks to warmer temperatures and the improvement of public transport. But you can still find mini-sleds, called "ice-cars," on frozen expanses of water such as at Beihai Park, the Summer Palace, Zizhuyuan Park and the moat around the Forbidden City. Simpler in configuration, the mini-sled is built for one person.

Crickets and cicadas

The tradition of keeping singing insects and fighting crickets has deep cultural roots in the ancient capital. The keeping of cicadas was regarded as an elegant hobby in the past. In dynastic China, the palace even had professionals to take care of the singing insects. With the same popularity that football enjoys today, cricket fighting

was a popular pastime for Beijingers. People started to rear cicadas and crickets around the onset of winter. In late autumn, a pot would be filled with soil in which the insect would lay their eggs. In winter, the pot would be placed in a warm place, covered with a cloth and watered every day.

A very special Chinese art of making crafted containers evolved with the requirements of keeping these singing "pets," in the form of pots, cages, cases, tubes and gourds. Materials used range from gold, jade, ivory and brass, to sandalwood, gourd, bamboo, reed, clay, porcelain and plastics.

Diabolo spinning

Diabolo spinning, or *dou kongzhu*, with a history of several centuries, is still a good form of exercise and a popular pastime in cold winter days in Beijing, enjoyed by both youngsters and elderly gentlemen.

Diabolas generally fall into two categories – single and double axel. They are a barbell-shaped hollow toy manipulated on a string tied to two sticks, which are held in the hands. The diabolo is hollow, with four or five holes drilled in it, which are the source of the noise it makes. The diabolo spins as it is manipulated from side to side, and it can be flung into the air and caught again on the string while still spinning. When the diabolo is spun fast enough, it emits a humming sound, resembling the sound of a cicada or a pigeon, depending on the type of diabolo.



Diabolo spinning

Paintings by Yang Xin

Ice fishing

Strolling along the frozen lakes on a clear and crisp winter day, you may come across one or two elderly men, all bundled up, sitting on a portable seat beside the frozen water while keeping a close eye on his fishing rod. The equipment beside him – mini-sled, drill, ice chisel, lure bags and the skimmer, tells how seriously he takes his hobby.

Temple fairs

A true cultural experience of the ancient capital, bustling temple fairs are the climax of the Spring Festival in Beijing. Temple fairs held in various temples are traditional gatherings that integrate religious worship, entertainment and commerce. The fairs have various booths demonstrating and selling traditional arts and crafts.

Tasty Treats

Another way to get a feel for the winter life of Beijingers is to sample some traditional Beijing delicacies that have been satisfying the city's populace for centuries.

Sugarcoated haws

As sort of unofficial, non-dancing logo of Beijing, the toffee-coated haw, or *tanghulu* in Chinese, is a traditional tasty winter treat in the capital city. About 20 centimeters long, bright red in color with a perfect sweet-and-sour taste, toffee-coated haws on a stick do not require much promotion among young sweet-lovers in Beijing, despite the increasing lure of foreign snacks like potato chips, popcorn and chocolate.

Every year when the days become cooler, food vendors carry large straw or plastic poles with dozens of toffee-

coated haws stuck in them, as they make their rounds from one neighborhood to another. Each vendor has his or her own distinct, rhythmic call. In addition to haws, there are also toffee-coated miniature apples, kumquats, yams, water chestnuts and Chinese dates.



Sugarcoated haws vendor

Boiled sheep's head

Boiled sheep's head (*yangtourou*) is an Islamic snack Beijingers eat while drinking spirits. It is made by boiling the sheep's head in water without any seasoning, and then cutting it into paper-thin slices, and finally sprinkling it with spiced salt.

Boiled pork

Bairou was originally a special dish for winter solstice. Pork is boiled in a tureen with no salt or oil, just a little spice. Take out the boiled pork and cut it into thin slices which are arranged on a serving plate. Some like to eat it with garlic soy sauce, and some like to add a little leek sauce, fermented bean curd and chili oil.

The pork soup is especially delicious with some pickled Chinese cabbage and leek, and is now a very

popular dish in many Beijing restaurants.

Mutton hotpot

Shuanyangrou, or mutton hotpot, is a popular winter dish in Beijing. Everyone sits around a table and cooks their own portions of food in the sizzling hot pot, dipping paper-thin slices of mutton into the boiling stock and then in a sauce of sesame paste and salted leeks.

The art of this dish lies in slicing the mutton so thinly, it only needs to cook in the boiling broth for a few seconds.

Kebab

Yangrou chuanr, or spicy mutton kebab, is another popular snack. Mutton pieces are stuck on a skewer and roasted over hot charcoal. When they are done, they kebabs are sprinkled with salt, pepper and cumin.

Winter Festivals

By Peng Juan

December 21 is the winter solstice – the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. It is the busiest festival season of the year in China, continuing through to the beginning of spring.

Winter Solstice Festival

The winter solstice, or *dongzhi*, (December 21 this year), is the last of the 24 *jieqi*, or solar terms. It marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Along with spring festival and mid-autumn festival, the winter solstice is an important traditional festival on the Chinese lunar calendar. It is a time for family reunions, and a time when farmers and fishermen gather food in preparation for the coming cold season.

In northern China, people eat dumplings on this day. It is said that doing so will ward off frost in the coming winter. In the south, families will get together to have a meal made of red-bean and glutinous rice to drive away ghosts and other evil things, or eat *tangyuan*, a small stuffed dumpling made of glutinous rice flour.

Yuandan

Because two calendars are used in China, the Gregorian calendar as well as the traditional Chinese lunar calendar, the term "new year" has become ambiguous. To differentiate, *Chunjie*, or Spring Festival, refers to the Chinese New Year, while Yuandan has now come to mean the first day of January, or the solar New Year.

Yuandan is celebrated as a one-day holiday in China. Traditions include the making of New Year's resolutions. Popular modern resolutions might include the promise to lose weight or quit smoking.

Laba

Laba is celebrated on the eighth day of the last lunar month (which falls on January 17 next year), referring to the traditional start of preparation for the Spring Festival. *Laba* in Chinese means the 12th lunar month and *ba* means eight. Legends about the origin of this festivity abound. One holds that over 3,000 years ago, sacrificial rites called *la* (腊) were held in the twelfth lunar month when people prayed to the gods of heaven and earth. Since the festival was held on the eighth day of the month, people later appended the number eight (*ba* in Chinese), hence "laba."

On this day, people eat *laba congee*. According to another popular belief, Sakyamuni, the first Buddha, attained enlightenment on the eighth day of the twelfth month. Sutras were chanted in temples and rice congee with beans, nuts and dried fruit was traditionally prepared as an offering to Buddha.

Xiaonian

The 23rd day of the 12th lunar month is called *xiaonian*. In 2005, it falls on February 1. On *xiaonian*, people used to offer sacrifices to the Kitchen God, who, according to popular belief, went to heaven on this day, where he would report to the Jade Emperor on the good and evil deeds of the family. The Jade Emperor would then give rewards or punishments as appropriate. People would make offerings of sweets, pure water and soybeans, and even put sugar on the mouth of a statue of the Kitchen God, so he wouldn't speak ill of the family.

After *xiaonian*, people would begin preparing for the coming Spring Festival. The house, clothing, bedclothes and all utensils were thoroughly cleaned, to bid farewell to the old year and to usher in the new. Store owners were kept busy, as everybody would stock up on oil, rice, chicken, fish and meat, fruit, candies and nuts, as well as various decorations, new clothes and shoes for children and gifts for friends and relatives. Couplets written on red paper, called *chunlian*, were pasted on either side of the front door, flowers were put in windows, and colored New Year paintings and red lanterns were hung, creating a happy and prosperous atmosphere.

Spring Festival

The first day of the first lunar month is *Chunjie*, the Spring Festival, which falls on February 9 next year. As the most important Chinese festival, celebrations traditionally lasted half a month, starting on *chuxi* (Spring Festival eve), and culminating on *Lantern Festival*, which marks the first full moon of the new lunar year.

Chunjie is a festival of family reunion. On the last evening of the twelfth lunar month, people commonly have a family dinner, make offerings to the ancestors, watch the Spring Festival Party on CCTV and set off fireworks to welcome the New Year. Houses are lit up brightly with lamps both inside and out.

People in northern China eat *jiaozi*, dumplings symbolizing the good wishes for wealth. Southerners eat *niangao*, or New Year cake made of glutinous rice flour, which is a homonym for "higher each year," symbolizing progress and promotion at work and improvement in life year by year.

On New Year's day, everybody dresses up in their best clothes. Children get *hongbao* (small red envelopes containing gift money) from their parents, grandparents and older relatives. During the first five days of the festival relatives, friends and colleagues pay each other New Year visits, or *bainian*, exchanging greetings and gifts.

People swarm into the streets to watch dragon and lion dances and *yangge* (folk dancing). The festival comes to an end with *Lantern Festival*, which is celebrated with lanterns and by eating *yuanxiao* or *tangyuan*, moon-shaped, sweet dumplings.

What's New

By Tom Spearman
CD
The Prodigy: Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned



Dance is dead, so they say, the most exciting musical movement of the last 20 years drowned by crass commercialism and creative flatlining. The sound is dominated right now by cheap europop and forgettable DJ nobodies. At times of crisis such as this, you look to the big names of the genre to see if they can muster a fight. But several of the best have already quit the scene, such as The Chemical Brothers and Orbital, and Fatboy Slim's recent album was nothing special. So can The Prodigy, the original dance punks, start the fires again? For the first two tracks, the answer's a screaming yes. *Spitfire* is classic Prodigy, aggressive and brutal, and *Girls* is a superb pisstake of '80s ideas and production values. But after that there's nothing more to get excited about. A brief flicker then, rather than a blazing return.

DVD
Short Cuts



This was the high point of director Robert Altman's brief return to form in the 1990s, and it's sad to think he followed this masterpiece with *Pret a Porter* and *Dr. T and the Women*. But in 1993, when *Schindler's List* and *The Piano* were released, many critics still hailed *Short Cuts* as the best film of the year. Based loosely on the short stories of Raymond Carver, the film follows a few days in the lives of more than a dozen characters, all played by some of the best actors in America. Though death and apocalypse seem to hang in the air and the characters give new meaning to the word dysfunctional, the film is frequently hilarious as well as tragic and frightening. The picture quality on this transfer is a little disappointing and the extras are all on disc two (not included here), so hopefully the DVD 9 version will eventually turn up in Beijing.

Code 46



This dreamy, hypnotic romance/thriller from British director Michael Winterbottom manages to avoid the pitfall of most films set in the future: an emptiness and lack of heart or emotion. While films like *Minority Report*, also starring the superb Samantha Morton, fail because the future amounts merely to cleverer gadgets, *Code 46* works because the future is so recognizable. The thing that's clever is the new disguise of the same old human fears and prejudices that still rule the world, a disguise that is exposed as the film proceeds. Laws and conventions that appear reasonable are merely timid justifications for the rich to separate themselves from the poor and a means to suppress feeling. The love affair between detective Tim Robbins and suspect Morton is both brief and epic, as the couple struggle against the grip of a sanitized world.

By Gareth George

Box story in a nutshell: Bobby Baker and a box emerge from the wings. Bobby Baker informs us that she is, in fact, a woman. Bobby Baker opens the box and coaxes out of it some other boxes: her shopping. She spends the next hour using these boxes and their contents as the triggers for a series of reminiscences about the misfortunes that have befallen her. And that's about it. Yet with a kind of 'over the garden fence' charm, a dab of self depreciation and the help of a very fine and long suffering virtual choir, she makes it fly.

Baker is the overly familiar neighbor you always try to



daily life"? There was a line in Richard Attenborough's biographical film of CS Lewis, *Shadowlands*, that went, "we read [novels] to know we're not alone." Likewise, watching Bobby Baker and her spectacular, dusty shopping explosions, her sentimental, nostalgic love letters (her Father's hair felt "all spiky when you stroked it," a revelation inspired by powdered mustard) felt like watching oneself. Not one's most public self, hopefully. And not always one's most conscious self. But one's most human self? Almost certainly.

About a Box



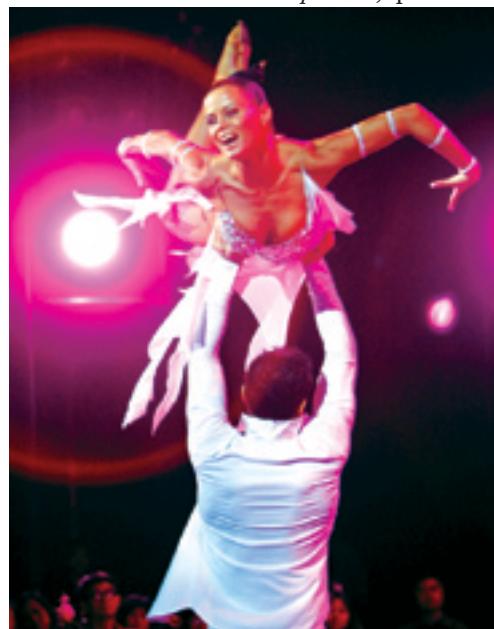
Photos by Tian Yufeng

Latin Dance Keeps Winter at Bay

By Pan Hao

Imagine what it would be like putting three pairs of talented and enthusiastic Latin dancers in a theater and turning on some hot Latin or jazz music. This is exactly what happened at Century Theater last Friday, and the passionate dancing by Jukka Haapalainen and Sirpa Sutari, Victor Da Siva and Hanna Karttunen, and Slavik Kryklyvyy and Karina Smirnoff was so hot, it seemed to slow the onset of winter in chilly Beijing.

Latin Dance World Superstar; produced



Victor Da Siva and Hanna Karttunen
Photo by Wang Xiaoxi

by Chang Yan and presented by Sixth Sense, was the first and only show in Beijing by these dance gurus. The stage was set up in a manner of a ball, with some of the audience seated at tables and chairs placed around the back of the stage. The program was arranged in several rounds, performed by each couple in turn.

Slavik and Karina were the perfect Latin dance couple. Slavik's movements were stylish, precise and nimble, while his partner Karina never missed a chance to show off her energy, performing some sensational spot turns. Victor Da Silva, with his muscular physique, danced with strength and manliness, perfectly offset by the exquisite Hanna Karttunen. When Jukka and Sirpa came on stage, it was not just dance, their movements told a vividly colorful story with every turn and meeting of eyes.

The three couples are champions of numerous professional international competitions. They danced Cha-Cha, Samba, Jazz and Spanish, smoothly and articulately expressing themselves in movement. Hanna Karttunen once said she only really knows who she is when she is dancing.

The last dance each couple performed were original pieces composed by the dancers themselves. Jukka and Sirpa told a sweet love story accompanied by an accordion, while Victor and Hanna seemed to make a tribute to the film *Troy*. When the opening bars of the Gipsy Kings' *Bamboleo* played for Slavik and Karina's piece, the audience knew they were in for a flamenco treat.

Korean Movies Hit Beijing

By Sabu Zhang

Korean movies are hot these days, and Korean movie DVDs are available in every video store. They are new, original, and have a wide appeal. Coming just at the right time to take advantage of this burgeoning popularity, a five-day Korean movie festival concluded Monday in Beijing.

From last Friday, twelve classic Korean movies were shown at Beijing New Century Theater and Xindong'an Theater. The featured movies were *The Classic*, *A Tale of Two Sisters*, *Wonderful Days*, *My Tutor Friend*, *My Little Bride, Brother, Singles, Oasis, Over the Rainbow*, *Maljuk High School*, *Lovers' Concerto* and *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter...and Spring*, three of which were screening for the first time in China.

The premieres were on the first day, when audience met face-to-face with Korean directors and actors. Taking part in the opening ceremony were an all-star lineup, includ-

ing well-known directors Kang Jae Gyu (director of *Tae Guk Gi* – which picked up nine nominations at the Korean Blue Dragon Film Festival) and Kim Ki Duk (director of *Isle, Samaria* and *3-Iron*), actor Cha Tae Hyun (starred in *Lovers' Concerto*), actress Jang Seo Hee (starred in *Miss Mermaid*) and Lee Eun Joo (starred in *Tae Guk Gi*).

All of the participants expressed their admiration for noted Chinese directors such as Zhang Yimou, Feng Xiaogang and Chen Kaige. Kim Ki Duk expressed a desire to see more Chinese entertainment and commercial movies, since he had only seen a few. Chinese director Feng Xiaogang said he was planning to work with Kang Jae Gyu and pointed out that Chinese and Korean movies influenced each other. Only half the available tickets were sold for the premiere, which may have something to do with the widespread availability of DVDs nowadays.

As a key part of the festival, the Sino-Korea movie forum opened last Friday. Issues like the current situation and commercial prospects of the movie industry were discussed. That night, Chinese fans were treated to a hot movie concert featuring Korean TV diva Jang Na Ra, popular band Jewelry and Loveholistic, Chinese singers Qu Ying, Sha Baoliang and punk band Flowers.

Auto Industry Geared Up to Be Major Job Source

By Xie Lixue

Sales may have sputtered a bit in China's auto market this year, but the industry is still headed full-bore towards the future. The latest development was the start of production of luxury Mercedes-Benz sedans at the newly renamed local joint venture Beijing Benz DaimlerChrysler Corp. on December 6. But more exciting than the prospect of made-in-China Benzes is the 85,000 job opportunities the company has promised to offer over the next decade.

China has become the world's fourth largest auto producer, trailing only the United States, Japan and Germany, according to a recent survey conducted by the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers.

Many jobs, many demands

Auto companies were among the most active seekers of new employees at the series of large job fairs held in Beijing and across the country this year, many looking to find skilled engine designers, standardization engineers and chassis designers.

But the opportunities do not end there. Because the auto industry covers a wide range of businesses, there are also many related jobs that do not require as much technical knowledge, especially in the areas of sales, maintenance, auto care and customizing, insurance, spare parts production and even used car dealing.

Standard salaries offered to newcomers in the auto field fall in the 2,500 yuan to 3,000 yuan a month range, while people with advanced educations or high degrees of skill can command 5,000 yuan to 6,000 yuan a month.

The combination of attractive pay, stability and promising futures is attracting many people to the field, but getting a job is not necessarily easy. Bottom-line requirements for most positions call for people aged 24 to 35 who hold bachelor's or higher degrees, have work experience and are good communicators.

Qualified candidates rare

The lofty base criteria for hiring to auto positions shears off the majority of interested candidates in the first rounds

of recruiting. That has led many recruiters to complain that they cannot find enough qualified people in the mobs at domestic job fairs.

Jin Chuchun, a retired expert in the field of auto design told *Beijing Today* that automobile manufacturing education in China lags far behind global standards.

Only 15 percent of the staff in China's automobile industry have received higher education, while the figure among their foreign counterparts is 30 percent.

"Our students always complain to us that they can hardly use what they learn because it is out of date," said Chen Shiquan, a professor at the automobile research center of Tsinghua University. "For example, carburetors still factor heavily in our textbooks, while most modern cars use electronic fuel injection systems."

"Job training is becoming increasingly important," Jin noted.

Training

While universities may not be equip-

ping students with the latest information, the auto industry itself is stepping up to close such gaps by offering a growing number of training options.

Among the newest and most attractive is certification and training organized by Germany's Institut für Technische Weiterbildung und Akademie für Berufsförderung und Umschulung gGmbH. In the program, students first undergo language training and then go to Germany for two years to study subjects like auto mechanics, the history of automotive development and the economics of the car industry.

They then return to China to go through rigorous internships. When they complete all the steps and pass exams, they are awarded certificates as auto mechanics recognized by the Industrie-und Handelskammer, a German industrial and commercial association. Such certification allows holders to work in Germany and has obvious advantages for finding work in the domestic auto industry.

Seeking Employment

The automobile air conditioner production mill of Morning Sun (Guangdong) Ltd. in Zhengcheng city is seeking office secretaries, translators, sales managers, marketing managers, accountants, accounting managers, recruiting managers, purchasing managers, quality inspectors, technicians and engineers. For more details or to submit resumes, please visit: www.dyy99.com

Female Beijinger, 39, is looking for a job and has a decade's experience in import-export business, human resources management, interpretation and secretarial work. I have a good command of computer skills and am good at English, both writing and speaking.

Mobile: 13611163663

Female Beijinger, 29, majored in accounting with Public Accountant Certification, fluent in English, both writing and speaking, is looking for a full-time job related to finance or part-time job related to English.

Tel: 8347-7009

E-mail:lily948@hotmail.com

Webmasters wanted. Familiarity with the Internet, web page design and music composition software essential. Love of music useful. Contact Mr. Hu at: 6333-1671 ext. 8006.

A graduate of information management from Huazhong S&T University in Wuhan, sophisticated in C/C++, VC6.0, VFP, Access, SQL Server, Activex and software developing, familiar with Flash, Photoshop, Excel, PP uses. Also familiar with medical English and Latin.

Contact: 82728588, 13622751429

E-mail: waaairu@sohu.com, sonx7@163.com

Beijing Fei Wanda is looking for three print designers, two commercial advertising collectors and two secretaries. Contact: 8737-8652 ext. 82/83 E-mail: kf@fwd863.com

Situations Vacant

A private medical clinic in Dongcheng is looking for a medical clinic secretary.

Requirements: fluent English and Mandarin with superior phone skills. Medical knowledge and terminology desirable. One-year commitment required.

Duties: Reception, phone, marketing/advertising, bookkeeping, appointment scheduling for doctors.

Pay: 4,000 RMB/mo if able to perform all listed duties.

Send resume to: confidantmedical@yahoo.com

A cultural media company wants to hire a foreigner for international business.

Requirements: male, British, long time in Beijing, love Chinese culture, stable, honest. Legal experience an advantage.

Contact: sun198052@yahoo.com.cn

Job Services

Help you to change your visa (f, x, z, j) and apply for a green card.

Tel: 8659 2919

E-mail: alen678@163.com

(You are welcome to send positions offered and wanted info to: ayi@ynet.com. Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the information published in this column.)

A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors.

Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience.

Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred.

Please send your resumes and writing samples to: hr@ynet.com



Students at the Beijing British School sang to celebrate the opening of the new school on August 12. Domestic schools are putting increasing emphasis on English language education of pupils of all ages, creating great demand for qualified, competent and creative English teachers.

Photo by Ayi

Learning to Teach

By Xie Lixue

Parents across this country are pressuring their children to learn English as early as possible, convinced the language is key to survival in China's increasingly competitive academic and work environments. The pressure of the parents' feverish English dreams is falling not only on their kids, but also on their children's teachers.

That means that English teaching is a field of opportunity. In 2003, there were only 20,000 English teachers at domestic primary schools for the 100 million students in Chinese schools, according to the *21st Century* newspaper, and with demand rising, a huge number of potentially rewarding positions are bound to open in the field.

Key to kids' English

While English classes for adults tend to be serious business, classes for kids need to be fun and stimulating to draw their interest and thereby lead them to effectively teach themselves. Often the most effective teaching methods with kids are those that are entertaining and instructive, like games, interactive reading exercises and story telling.

Qiu Yaode, dean of the English department at Capital Normal University told *Beijing Youth Daily* that because children had no direct purpose in studying English, they faced less personal pressure from expectations and exams and were

often able to easily interact with foreign kids.

"One of the most effective methods of English teaching for kids is story telling, with the program 'Happy Rainbow' on China Radio International a good example. The program features short and funny stories that draw kids to pay attention, leading them to gradually learn English letters, words and phrases," Qiu said.

Problems

In many foreign countries, all primary school educators are expected to hold at least bachelor's degrees, but that is not true in China. Only around 65 percent of teachers in kindergartens and elementary schools have education backgrounds above the senior high school level, be it at vocational schools or universities, *21st Century* said.

Low levels of education tend to give rise to teachers with low language and instructive abilities. Graduates from teaching programs may have solid understanding of educational theory and methods, but they often fall short on English proficiency and their incorrect or unclear pronunciation and intonation can lead students astray.

On the other hand, some teachers with strong English abilities are not skilled at managing classrooms or working with kids. So even if they teach children proper English, their rigid and boring classes can

cause students to lose interest.

Training and certificates

In order to meet market demand and standardize the booming English education market, many universities and training centers offer programs for teachers or people hoping to teach children who already have solid English abilities.

Meng Bin, director of the practical English department at Beijing New Oriental School told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that her school's four-month training course included classes on English, educational theory, childhood psychology and practical teaching methods.

"Our foreign trainers can help prospective teachers improve their English abilities, especially listening and speaking," Meng said.

"One of our foreign trainers used to teach math and English at a kindergarten in the US and demonstrates the lively teaching methods and dynamic atmosphere of classes there. Our trainees really like those classes. Other experienced trainers teach educational theory classes that take into account Chinese conditions."

With demand on a steady rise, many education centers and universities are stepping up to provide reputable training courses and certificates for teachers. Among the top qualifications are the Cambridge Young Learners English certificate and certificates from New Oriental School and Tsinghua University.

By Zhang Nan

Imagine living in a shabby flat in an old building and not having enough spending money to cover two proper meals per day. Imagine having to devote most of your time to working at thankless part-time jobs just to sustain yourself and living in a state of near poverty that leads to thoughts of desperate acts...

Such are the conditions of some Chinese who head abroad to further their educations. The number who experience such hardship is a fraction of the total number going overseas, which has been increasing dramatically in recent years as the list of target countries has expanded to include Germany, France, Norway and South Africa. But nearly every student abroad will face some hardship, sometimes harsh enough to drive them to desperate or criminal acts.

That reality has been described in domestic press reports and evocatively depicted in *China Youth Daily* journalist Chen Tieyuan's book *Study Abroad and Garbage - Problems of China's Overseas Students*, published earlier this year.

Tricky agents set traps

A domestic agency ran an evocative ad describing a school in Germany with a beautiful campus and excellent academic programs – grossly exaggerated claims, as some unfortunate Chinese students discovered.

Wang Fang, a 23-year-old young woman from Shanghai, paid the agent \$10,000 to be enrolled at Kone Language College, which the agent's literature said was a great place for students to learn overseas thanks to its modern teaching facilities, comfortable dormitories and landscaped grounds. Even better, after passing a one-year language training course, students were told they could enter Kone University to pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees for free.

However, when Wang arrived at the German school with five other students, she was in for a terrible surprise. The college was tucked away in a tiny, remote city and its buildings were all dirty and in a sad state of upkeep.

German international radio station Deutsche Welle later reported that the private language school, founded by a German and a Chinese investor, had no connection to Kone University and its course certificates were not accepted by any German universities.

Living illegally in Japan

The closure of private and provincial universities in Japan as a result of mismanagement has led to an increasing number of Chinese students living illegally in the country.

Jin Huimin, a 26-year-old Chinese girl of Korean ethnicity went to Japan to study at Sakata Short-term University in 2000. Not long after she enrolled, local media uncovered university leaders had illegally appropriated money from students' scholarships and defaulted on payment of staff salaries. The school went bankrupt in 2003, leaving Jin and other Chinese students empty handed in Japan without legal qualification to be there.

The China News Service reported last year that nearly 40,000 Chinese were staying illegally in Japan. Many students borrowed money from friends and relatives to go to the country to study, meaning they did not have money to go back, it said. Unable to complete their studies and return to China, many have no choice but to take on illegal part-time jobs to try to earn their way home. Japan's Kyodo News Agency said last March that some students staying in Japan against regulations were even taking part-time jobs at providers of illegal sex services in the red-light districts of Japanese cities.

Student criminals

In recent years, the number of crimes overseas involving Chinese students has risen dramatically.

In January 2003, a Chinese student in Japan sneaked into a woman's house, stabbed her to death and stole 25,000 yen. He then broke into a nearby home, attacked another woman inside with a flowerpot and made off with 95,000 yen.

That May, another four Chinese students were captured by Japanese police after breaking into a man's home, stealing his money and stabbing him.

New Zealand has seen a similar rash of criminal acts by Chinese students. Ye Jia murdered his former girlfriend Sun Wenbin in the country in May 2003 in a lover's quarrel. A few months before, a Chinese student who had lost all his money gambling hired three Maori men to kidnap another student from China and demanded a ransom of 5 million yuan from the student's family.

Sources of struggle and suggestions

False advertising by universities and agents leads



More and more enthusiastic Chinese youngsters are expecting to spend years to live abroad to enrich their life and career experiences. But coldness and uncertainties overseas are the inevitable difficulties they have to overcome in the years to come.

Photo by Photocom

to many disappointments for gullible Chinese students, draining them of their money and shattering their hopes of overseas glory with harsh reality.

Stefan Hase-Bergen, who works at DAAD, an organization that helps arrange Chinese students to go to Germany, said many private schools like the Kone Language College ran advertisements in this country to attract domestic students. Enrolling in the schools cost upwards of 100,000 yuan, but they often provided little more than a few lessons a week and appalling living conditions, he said.

Hase-Bergen suggested students do their best to get real, detailed information about schools and universities they are considering. For studying in Germany, he added, it was particularly important to make sure they had the qualifications to be accepted by universities, normally meaning having taken China's *gaokao* (university entrance exam) and having studied at a key Chinese university for at least one year or at a normal university for at least three terms.

"In the face of fierce competition, study abroad companies, including private language schools, are always teetering on the edge of closure. Many private language schools aim to earn money more than to teach students," Ni Zhihong, a consultant at DAAD Beijing, told *Beijing Today* this Tuesday.

"Therefore, students

should choose relatively large language schools with good reputations. Most of the language schools in Germany are private, but some larger schools, like the Goethe Institute and Deutsch

Institut, are supported by the government and offer good courses."

Ni added it was a good idea for students headed to Germany to take German language courses in China first. Students intending to go to Japan should be even more careful to avoid ending up illegal aliens in the country.

Japan's low birth rates mean there are not enough native students 18 years old or above to fill all the seats at most provincial and private universities. The regulations of Japan's educational administration hold that schools that do not enroll a certain number of students must close. That has led many schools to focus on recruiting international students to keep up their numbers, while the students themselves unwittingly end up in precarious positions, because when schools are closed, the visas held by their foreign students are cancelled and the students have to return to their home countries.

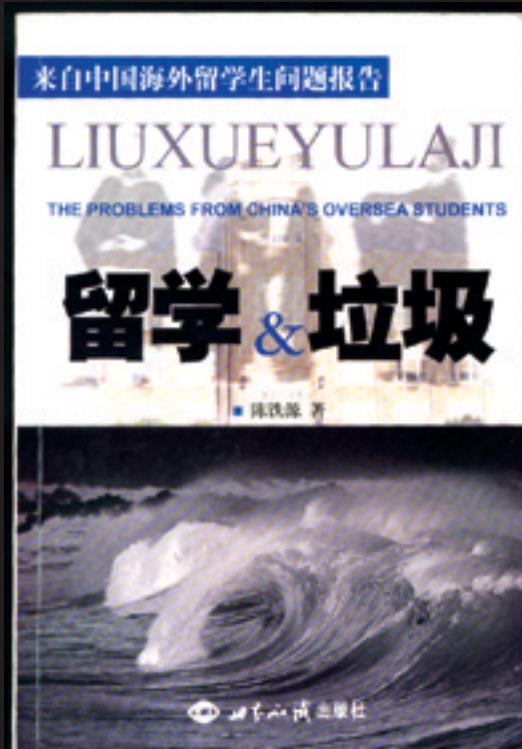
Since last September, China's Ministry of Education has posted a notice on its website warning students looking to head abroad to avoid unqualified schools. "Students can also log onto the ministry's official website for a clear name list of qualified Japanese schools," said Zhao Yue, manager of the Japan and Korea department at the JJL study abroad agency.

"Students had best not go to short-term colleges. Although these schools have relatively low entrance requirements, they do not provide good educations and cannot guarantee students' safety," Zhao said, adding good Japanese universities send teachers and administrators to China every year to interview Chinese applicants, providing good opportunities to enroll in reputable schools.

Regarding the problem of crime among Chinese students abroad, Chen Tieyuan analyzed in his book that the phenomenon was mostly a result of the guilty students' characters. After always being coddled at home by their parents, today's young people were not able to live on their own and they were selfish and unforgiving and incapable of independent thinking and managing their own finances, he wrote. Therefore, they could not resist temptations like gambling while abroad and burned through their money, leading them to taking extreme actions when they encountered real trouble.

An unnamed consulate officer at the Chinese embassy in New Zealand told the Xinhua News Agency last year that he hoped Chinese parents would not send their children abroad to study when they were too young. "Although most Chinese students study hard and are disciplined, some lack the ability to control themselves," the officer said.

He suggested that Chinese students learning overseas concentrate on their studies and not hang out around "bad places". When they encountered problems, students could always contact the local Chinese embassy, he said. As a final suggestion, he said parents should work hard to communicate and connect with their children and not coddle them too much so they can learn to take care of themselves.



Chen Tieyuan, a journalist for *China Youth Daily*, spent years traveling abroad, research from which forms the base of his new book *Study Abroad and Garbage - The Problems From China's Overseas Students*.

Photo courtesy by World Affairs Publishing House

"Students had best not go to short-term colleges. Although these schools have relatively low entrance requirements, they do not provide good educations and cannot guarantee students' safety."

— Zhao Yue, manager of JJL study abroad agency

"Chinese parents should not send their children abroad to study when they are too young... Parents should work hard to communicate and connect with their children and not coddle them too much so they can learn to take care of themselves."

— official from the Chinese Embassy in Wellington, New Zealand

Where the Geeks Are

2. Webb Institute

This small, intensive, and competitive school located on the north shore of Long Island specializes in marine engineering and naval architecture. All students here have a similar schedule that includes "class from 9 am to 3 pm and dinner at 5:30 pm." And then there are the stacks of homework assignments.

3. United States Coast Guard Academy

The "small classes" here are "very demanding" though some subject matters – like core class requirements in nautical science – borders on "vocational." During the regular school year, "you choose a major" and "take the classes you are told to take."

4. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

How intense is an MIT education? "Say you like Pez candy," posits one MIT undergrad. "MIT, then, is like being forced to eat 13,109 Pez candies." Indeed, "the workload is heavy..." If you understand what does and does not help you learn, life here becomes much more manageable."

The massive amount of work "almost destroys any social life outside of school."

But students appreciate the school's emphasis on teamwork and interaction, which ensures that "there is a spirit of cooperation rather than competition."

5. Harvey Mudd College

This mathematics, engineering, and science school of the Claremont Colleges is, students admit, "an incredibly hard school; the work load is huge, and the classes are just dead hard."

Material "is taught extremely fast. It takes a few weeks to get used to, but it makes everything so much more interesting and motivating."

6. Harvey Mudd College

This mathematics, engineering, and science school of the Claremont Colleges is, students admit, "an incredibly hard school; the work load is huge, and the classes are just dead hard."

But "homework is probably one of the most common pastimes. It turns into a social function. People gather to enjoy each other's company and have fun, as well as get work done."

(Continued next week...)

Ask Ayi:

Q: My son hopes to enroll in a postgraduate course in the arts in Russia, but we have no idea about education there and quality of life, except that it is hard. Can you give us some more details?

A: Russia has 560 state universities and colleges and 275 city and regional ones.

Nearly 12,000 self-sponsored Chinese students were studying in Russia by the end of last year.

Generally, students have to spend four to five years to complete a bachelor's degree, two years for a master's degree and three years for a doctoral degree or PhD. The State PhD degree is the highest academic certification available in Russia.

Annual tuition fees range between \$1,500 and \$3,000 at comprehensive and technical universities and between \$2,500 and \$4,500 for popular programs like international business and MBA courses. Schools of art have the highest charges of \$4,000 to \$7,000 per year.

Living expenditures are equally inexpensive, comparatively. Housing in campus dormitories (one bed per room) costs between \$30 and \$120 each month, while food expenses run \$80 to \$100. All students must get annual medical insurance coverage, which costs around \$100.

It is generally hard for international students to get work permits. But as many Chinese are doing business in Russia, demand for interpreters is high in Chinese communities there. Daily wages run around \$50, with monthly wages around \$800 to \$1,000.

Q: My daughter is a second year student in junior high school. Her father and I are considering sending her to Australia for her senior high school education. Is that possible and/or recommended?

A: Australia's primary education lasts six years, the same as in China. After that, Australia requires students to finish four years of secondary school, the equivalent of junior high school in China, where that is normally three years. Therefore, your daughter could finish her junior high school education in China first and then start her education in Australia in the fourth year of that country's secondary education curriculum.

After that, your daughter could go through two years of senior secondary education, which is similar to senior high school in China. Following graduation, she could apply to university in Australia.

(Edited by Ayi)

Difficulty, Frequency Raised for US Tests

The US' Educational Testing Service (ETS) confirmed last week that two more TOEFL written examinations would be held in China next year than in this or previous years.

The added tests, run on July 9 and August 20, would supplement the regular written tests held in January and May, ETS said on its website.

The newly-revised TOEFL test will debut in September 2005. Though the content and format of the latest test are similar to earlier incarnations, the overall difficulty level has been increased.

The testing organization also said it plans to change parts of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) for graduate study applications starting October 2006.

The changes would be made to the verbal and quantitative sections. More reading articles would be verbal section, while subjective questions would be added to the quantitative portion to truly reflect examinees' abilities, it said.

Wang Haibo, project manager for examinations at New Oriental Education & Technology Group told *Beijing Youth Daily* Monday that the GRE changes could prove advantageous to Chinese students, as most already score well on the verbal and quantitative sections.

(By Zhang Nan)



Murano glass pendant, 460 yuan Photos by Sun Haitao

Glass Masters

Murano glass has all the sought-after qualities of crystal – its clarity, hardness and luster – plus much more thanks to the colorful pieces fitted inside that render the glass amazingly vibrant.

Before, to get Murano glass, Beijingers all but had to fly to the little island off the coast of Venice, Italy where it is made. But not anymore, thanks to the opening of the Murano Glass store in Grand Plaza. Owner Sun Haitao takes great pride in bringing the beautify of this celebrated Italian craft to China.

Sun said he first got hooked on the glass when his wife received a Murano glass pendant from a friend a year ago. "My wife one day came to me and showed me the pendant on her neck, and I was fascinated by the beautiful, unique look of the glass. I thought it was a shame there was nowhere in Beijing to buy such wonderful articles and then got determined to bring them here. I think these pieces can make great gifts for special occasions."

During the time of Alexander the Great, craftsmen noticed that when they poured molten glass into a mold, a small dribble would solidify into a glass thread, Sun explained. Patterns could be formed by putting different fragments of glass threads together and fusing them, and thus the art of glassmaking was born.

In 1291, the Venetian Republic ordered glassmakers to move their foundries to Murano because the glassworks represented a fire danger in Venice, whose buildings were mostly wooden at the time. During the next few centuries, the island's glass masters also developed or refined technologies such as enameled glass, glass with threads of gold and multicolored glass.

Sun's store sells mainly pendants of two main types – sterling chain, with gold or silver powder and sometimes metal slices inside the glass, and murine glass, which has dozens of metal or mineral pieces of different sharp colors and shapes fixed together. No two pieces of Murano glass are the same, making the prices of 70 to 550 yuan even more reasonable.

Where: 3008A Grand Plaza, 14 Guanghua Xilu, Chaoyang
Open: 10 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 6501 5187

Boutique Bonanza at Grand Plaza



Round pendants 180 yuan and 280 yuan, rectangular pendant 380 yuan

From the Land of Pharaohs

Egyptian handcrafts have suddenly become trendy, leading to the opening of many hieroglyph-themed stores around town. But to get all kinds of stuff related to ancient Egypt's pharaohs, myths and daily life under one roof, head to the Egyptian Ornaments Store, a relatively new business that offers many things Egyptian at mostly reasonable prices.

Among the most traditional and impressive products in the store are the boldly colored paintings that Xu Ying, the store's owner, imported directly from Egypt. Xu told *Beijing Today* that each painting tells an ancient Egyptian story and is made of natural materials, from the papyrus paper to the plant-based paints.

These paintings are very popular among tourists that head to Egypt, Xu said, meaning the Egyptian Ornaments Store could save you the trip. They come with prepared designs to which one's own name, or those of a recipient, can be added. Prices run from 438 to 1,085 yuan.

Certainly less traditional but no less festive are the store's many stationary options. Check out the ballpoint pens (138 yuan) topped with molded heads of pharaohs, Cleopatra or other figures. Pencil cases and leather purses also carry traditional Egyptian images in patterns embossed into their surfaces. They cost around 100 yuan a piece.

Where: 3046, Grand Plaza, 14 Guanghua Xilu, Chaoyang **Open:** 10 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 6501 5737



Paintings: 438-1,085 yuan



Mirror, 190 yuan



Throne decoration, 438 yuan



Throne decoration, 438 yuan

By Wang Xiaoxiao

The local shopping scene is going up-scale, multi-cultural and ultra-specialized. For evidence, one need look no further than Grand Plaza, or Jiaduxiuchang, a new complex located behind China World Trade Center opposite the Kerry Centre. This three-storey development, which opened early last month, houses 188 boutiques and small stalls stocking a myriad of jewelry, clothes and home decorations, meaning there is sure to be something to suit any taste and plenty of interesting shopping on offer under one roof.

Statements of Personality

Finding accessories that are really, uniquely you can be a challenge. Ever have one of those days when nothing in your jewelry box or drawers seems capable of making the kind of personal statement you want to project to the world? If so, head to Ankh, a store that carefully crafts customized silver amulets to exactly match customers' wishes.

Storeowner Nan Xi told *Beijing Today* every amulet she sells has a specific meaning – be it health, power, love or good wishes – represented through ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

An easy place to start when writing one's own pictographic passage is with posters on the wall that present the symbols for all the signs of the Chinese and Western zodiacs. Or start with the ancient Egyptian version of your name and add freely to create the kind of amulet to make any statement.

But that's just step one. After writing protective or auspicious passages, customers can choose the shapes of their amulets from among 20 choices including hearts, clovers, drops and suns. "Even if you can't find one of our set designs you're satisfied with, we can make custom amulets to exactly match your demands," Nan said. Custom jobs take about 10 days for delivery.

Taking a page from the cutting-edge field of biometrics, Ankh even offers a unique amulet creating service sure to provide wearers with absolute individuality – fingerprint amulets. Give store staff a clear impression of your fingerprint and they can produce a pendant, bracelet, or even ring bearing swirling lines that are yours and yours alone.

Many couples choose to wear pieces with identical or similar patterns as tokens of their love. Anything is possible at Ankh – simply bring in a plan or come up with one at the store and they'll turn the ideas into shining reality. Items generally range in price from 180 to 360 yuan.

Where: 3048 Grand Plaza **Open:** 10 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 6501 5060



Fingerprint pendant (bottom left), 180-360 yuan



Candy dish, 380 yuan



Buddha head, 338 yuan



Jewelry set, 2,900 yuan



Bootie ashtray, 120-380 yuan

Visions of Paradise

Stuff from the Indian sub-continent is oh-so hip these days, and riding that wave come Paradise Eyes, a store that specializes in traditional handicrafts, clothing and jewelry from across South Asia.

Striking, beautifully colored Indian blankets on the walls attract many passersby, but owner Maggie Liang says her store has much more to offer. Most of the many products available represent iconic items from different countries – jewelry, tapestries and blankets from India, smaller handicrafts from Pakistan and elegant, simple clothing from Nepal.

Among Liang's most prized possessions are copper bowls used in Buddhist ceremonies. Running a stick made of wood from a bodhi tree around the rim of one of these bowls produces a magical, sonorous tone. It is the sound of "om" itself, the first thing the Buddha heard when he was born that has since become a standard mantra across the Buddhist world, Liang explained. The remarkable bowls come in different sizes and range in price from 350 to 800 yuan.

More playful than spiritual are candy containers of bright copper based on those used by royal families in India's past. Maid-servants carried such vessels filled with fresh fruit, candies and snacks to sate the appetites of queens and female nobility when they left their palaces. Despite their lofty heritage, these items are accessibly priced at 390 yuan.

Among the more functional and pretty items are little jar-shaped ashtrays from Pakistan meant to be stowed in the pocket and carried around. The covers can be taken off to present a place to put a burning butt anywhere, while the vessels themselves can hold ash instead of spraying it about. Other ashtrays in fun shoe shapes are great for a coffee table or anywhere one might light up.

Likely the most practical products in the store are the wool sweaters made in Nepal. Wool from Nepal is much warmer than common forms, according to Liang, because the goats live at very high altitudes in the Himalayas. "One of these sweaters is enough to get through the winter in Beijing, and the cloth lining is wind-proof for added warmth and protection," she said. Sweaters run 400 to 680 yuan.

Where: 2029 Grand Plaza **Open:** 10 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 6501 3976

Photos by Ma Sen

Personal Classifieds

Accommodation

Furnished commercial/residential apartment of 106 square meters for lease. Free parking, the apartment is located on the third floor of a five-star hotel within northwest fourth ring road, close to shopping malls, banks, supermarket and restaurants. US \$1,000 per month plus utilities and deposit. Contact: Jennifer, 8844 7480, 13693189800, Email: chouhua@yahoo.com

Brand new luxury 3-bedroom apartment in CLASS community for rent, US \$2,120 per month. The apartment is located in Wangjing, 9 kilometers to German International School. Fee paid by tenant: TV channel fee, water, gas, electricity, ADSL Internet, phone. Available from January 2005, family/long-term lease/non-smoker preferred. No agents. Contact: 13801133854, email: janeing@sohu.com

Two-bed-room apartment with one living room located near Guomao for lease. Well furnished and equipped, 3,500 yuan per month. Contact: 13911015178 (English and Mandarin speaking)

Language Exchange

A Chinese girl, graduate of University of International Business and Economics, is looking for a native English speaker as a language partner. Her hobby is photography, swimming, skating, and surfing the Internet. Contact: bennng@126.com

Betty, a 22 years old English-major, just graduated, is now working as a translator. She is looking for an English native speaker as friend. Contact: zhangqin_0308@163.com, MSN: qianshangzi@hotmail.com

Professional Help

Guo Yueqing, with two years experience in foreign enterprises, wants to find a part time job in an administrative field, such as secretary, administration assistant or receptionist. Contact: 13522968707

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Performances



Sweden's Tolvan Big Band on Tour

Tolvan Big Band from Sweden is making its debut tour of China. Tolvan Big Band has worked with some of the world's greatest musicians. Personalities like Dizzy Gillespie, David Liebman, Michael Brecker, and Mike Westbrook were all highly impressed by this creative band. As Michael Brecker expressed, "You can't find such a band even in New York." Listen to Tolvan Big Band and experience the truth of his statement!

Where: Haidian Theater, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian **When:** Saturday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,080 yuan **Tel:** 6255 5898



The Palace of Eternal Youth (Changsheng Dian)

This Kunqu opera commemorates the 300th anniversary of the death of Hong Sheng, the renowned playwright of the Qing Dynasty. The play is about the

Music

Snow Wolf Lake - Jacky

It is a legend of love, a legend that you can see with your own eyes, as long as you believe it. Seven years after the debut of the musical opera *Snow Wolf Lake*, Jacky Cheung will restage the Mandarin version on Christmas Eve at the Capital Gymnasium. "It is my dream to create a classic musical opera for Chinese people rather than for myself, I hope that one day the Snow Wolf Lake can be performed by others rather than by myself, in that way the cost will be reduced and enable more music lovers to enjoy it," Jacky Cheung said.

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 5 Baishiqiao, Xizhimenwai, Haidian **When:** December 24 – January 1, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-2,280 yuan **Tel:** 6554 6666



组委会售票热线: 84250625 87483209 65170030 中文票务: 65546666 65518888

sophisticated love story of a Tang emperor and his concubine. To maintain the original glamour of the show, all 300 costumes in the traditional style have been handmade and embroidered in the Suzhou style. Chinese musicians will play over 30 types of traditional instruments used in Kunqu opera, which boasts a longer history in China than Peking Opera.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** December 11-13, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 400-1,200 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5216



Swan Lake by Russia's Pushkin Ballet Troupe

Russian National Pushkin Ballet Troupe is to restage its classic ballet *Swan Lake* in Beijing. The earliest of the Russian "Big Three," *Swan Lake* is an important part of the repertoire of all the world's major classical ballet companies. First staged in 1877 by Wenzel Reisinger, the Petipa version is the one that survives today.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** December 15-17, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-880 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5216



Violin Duet

Renowned violinists Xue Wei and Lu Siqing will hold a joint concert in Beijing at the Forbidden City Concert Hall. It is unusual in China for two such famous violinists to perform together.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, in Zhongshan Park, Xicheng **When:** Saturday, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Italian Opera: Musical

The China Opera House will perform Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, one of the most famous Italian operas of all time. The Italian classic will be sung in Chinese for the first time. As part of the Italian Opera Festival, this show is co-sponsored by China's Central Opera Theater and the Italian embassy in China.

Where: Tianqiao Theatre, 30 Beiwaiyu, Xuanwu **When:** December 12-13, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-380 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6170

Christmas Music Concert

This Christmas songs concert distinguishes itself by creating a European Christmas atmosphere by singing Christmas songs in various languages: German, French, English, etc.



Where: Tianqiao Theatre, 30 Beiwaiyu, Xuanwu **When:** December 12-13, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-380 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6170

English, Italian, Russian and Chinese. After the concert, all audience members will receive a CD of the performers as a small Christmas gift.

Where: Ping Ju Grand Theater, 4 Building 19, Xiluoyuan, Fengtai **When:** December 18, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 8728 0877

Exhibitions



Old Beijing in Memory – Cui Tiecheng's Paintings

Taking the life of old Beijing as his central theme, Cui Tiecheng expresses his love for the city through artistic representation of bird-keepers, barbers, New Year's picture sellers and other typical images.

Where: Melodic Gallery, 14 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** daily 9 am – 5 pm until December 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6515 8123

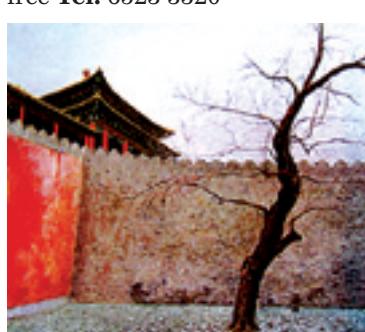


Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1 E, Huaweili, Enjoy Paradise, Chaoyang **When:** daily 9:30am-5 pm until December 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

Feelings of East and West

Liu Maoshan became famous ten years ago with his imagery of Jiangnan landscapes. Art collectors tend to favor his works. Liu is now 62 and paints using the traditional brush style.

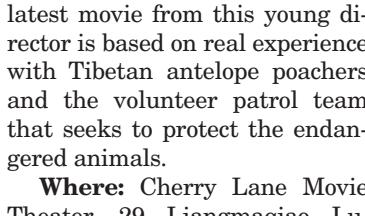
Where: Wang Fung Art Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** December 11-20, 10 am – 6 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6523 3320



Wang Jimin Solo Exhibition

Wang Jimin was born and grew up in Beijing. His works feature the hutong culture of old Beijing.

Where: Fa Fa Gallery, 1 Xiangjiang Beilu, Jingshun Lu, Chaoyang **When:** December 11-26, daily 10:30 am – 8 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8450 6688 ext. 310



Where: Head of State, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun **When:** December 16, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

of a recent oil spill. Zorba promises the gull that he'll look after the egg she's nesting, and before long Lucky is hatched. Zorba watches over the baby bird and teaches it to fly with the help of his friends. An adorable animation with a positive message for all who watch it, for adults as well as children. Directed by Enzo D'Alo. Italian with English subtitles.

Where: Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun **When:** December 16, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Activities

Pedicab Tour of Beijing Hutongs

Chinese Culture Club guides you to off-the-beaten-path hutong areas. Compare grand courtyards with humble ones, visit the homes in the neighborhood for a chat, and then check out the former red-light lanes and a 500-year-old Cuizhou style nightclub as well as nearby shops and galleries. Architecture, fengshui, lifestyle, ideology and the government's policy on hutongs will be explained.

Meet at the southeast corner (in front of the building with a tea house on the second floor) of Liulichang Cultural Street, Hepingmen **When:** Saturday, 2 pm **Cost:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913

TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

10 Friday

The Bourne Identity 9 pm

11 Saturday

Tears of The Sun 9 pm

12 Sunday

Head of State 10:30 pm

13 Monday

Star Trek Generations 9 pm

14 Tuesday

Fletch 6:50 pm

15 Wednesday

About Schmidt 11:05 pm

16 Thursday

National Security 9 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Culture Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Culture Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2:30 pm

Fun in Beijing 5:50 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

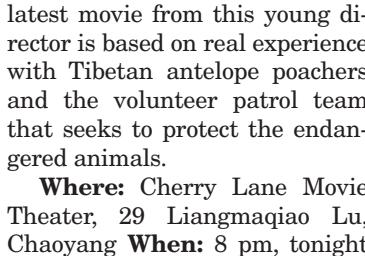
Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language-exchange and accommodation information for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2518

By Zhang Jianzhong



Hot Spring in Cold Winter



Longmai Wenquan

By Hester Xu and Arron Chang

In his timeless masterpiece *A Song of Unending Sorrow*, the great Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi (772-846) wrote of the famous Yang Yuhuan, the concubine whose beauty is said to have caused the dynasty's downfall, bathing in a hot spring: "It was early spring. They bathed her in the *Huaqingchi*, which warmed and smoothed her creamy-tinted, crystal-like skin."Hot spring baths are recorded in two ancient classics: *Records of the Mountains and Rivers* and *Commentary on the Waterways*.

The practice was highly popular in ancient China and the many benefits it bought in terms of health and beauty were well documented. Qin Shihuang (259-210 BC), the first emperor of the Han Dynasty reputedly bathed in a hot spring to treat a poison wound.

Hot springs are generally formed in one of two ways: After a volcanic eruption, lava trapped beneath the earth's crust heats the water in sedimentary rocks, which partially vaporizes and rises to the surface, creating a

sulphur spring.

The other common form of hot spring occurs when rainwater filters down through the earth's surface and is heated by hot air released through the earth's crust. Bubbling to the surface again it becomes a carbonated spring.

There are many more, less common types of hot springs, which according to traditional Chinese medicine, are beneficial to the body in different ways.

Carbonated springs have a low water temperature and help improve blood circulation and the function of the heart and blood vessels.

The water feels cold at the beginning, but gradually warms up and heats the body slowly. It does not place an extra burden on the heart by quickening the pulse. Carbonated springs can be beneficial to people suffering from high blood pressure, heart disease, arthritis and rheumatism.

Sulphur springs, also called "bad egg springs" for their sulphurous smell, are best for treating chronic skin diseases, and have a soothing, detoxifying and softening effect.

Salt springs leave a layer of salt on the skin after the bath, which is good for skin tissue and beneficial to people with skin problems. They are also good for people with anaemia, diabetes and bronchial problems caused by allergy, but are unsuitable for those with high blood pressure.

Sodium bicarbonate springs can nourish, whiten and soften the skin. They can also relieve inflammation and help reduce scar tissue caused by burns.

Pure springs are mild, colorless and odorless. They can help improve blood circulation and relieve pain, which makes them a popular choice for the elderly.

Most of the hot springs around Beijing are in the vicinity of Xiaotangshan, which was a popular bathing resort for the Qing emperors.

Among the more than 2,700 hot springs in China, *Huaqingchi* in Xi'an is reputed as "the first hot spring in China" and the most famous. The spring, which was formed some two or three million years ago, maintains a temperature of 43 degree Centigrade.

A hot spring bath is definitely a joy for the coldest season. Soaking in a hot spring with a loved one, sipping fragrant tea, watching the falling leaves and whirling snowflakes through the window and enjoying the spring-like warmth inside the room, you might suddenly feel you have found the elusive Shangri-la.

Map and photo by Arron Chang

Top Hot Spots around Beijing

A little way west of the town of Jinzhai, **Yujinxiang Wenquan Dujiacun** (Tulip Hot Spring Garden Resort) was once a thriving base for the growing and selling of flowers, especially tulips. But a hot spring discovered in 2001 turned it into a holiday resort for bathing lovers.

A special feature of the resort is the so-called "home pool" attached to the villa houses. The Hot Spring Villa is a one storey terraced house consisting of several connected suites, each with its own

sitting room, bedroom, bathroom and open-air hot spring pool, enclosed in a square courtyard.

The pools are designed for two people. The hot spring water comes from 3,000 meters underground, with water temperatures as high as 65 degree Centigrade. The water has a high mineral content and appears murky at first – you need to leave the bathtub drain open for a while until the water becomes clear. Although the spring water has a strong sulphur smell, it feels comfortable once you become accustomed to it.

Where: Dongwei

Road, Jinzhai County,

Chaoyang District

Getting there: Take the Weigou Exit from the Airport Expressway, and drive south on Dongwei Road for 1 kilometer

Prices: 480 yuan for double suite, 580 yuan for deluxe suite with sauna room. For 6 people or more, choose the clubhouse in the resort for a special discount.

Tel: 8433 7802

Chunhuiyuan

Dujiacun (Spring Sun Garden Hot Spring Holiday Resort) is near the Wenyu River in Shunyi County. Part of the same water system as Xiaotangshan Hot Springs, the water comes from 1,500 meters underground, and remains at 60 degree Centigrade all year round. Chunhuiyuan is a slightly alkaline sodium bicarbonate spring and the resort is the first health center in Beijing incorporating the recuperating function of beauty treatment and flowing water treatment.

If you don't have time to spend a night, take the single room Medicine Bath in Big Wooden Bucket package, which caters for two people with two buckets in the room.

The room itself is decorated in Japanese style with wooden floor, tatami mat and futon.

Two big wooden buckets are placed against a bamboo wall on which one hose for hot spring water and another for cold spring water are attached, allowing you to control the temperature yourself.

Where: Lisiu Town,

Chaobai Hepar, Shunyi County

Getting there: Take the Beijing-Shunyi Highway,

turn left after passing Sunhe Bridge and go west along the river for ten minutes. **Prices:** 120 yuan for 90 minutes in the Medicine Bath in Big Wooden Bucket, 350 yuan for a standard room, membership price 278 yuan per day. On weekends, 380 yuan for a standard room, membership price 298 yuan per day. **Tel:** 6945 4433

Longmai Wenquan Dujiacun (Dragon's Spine Hot Spring Holiday Resort) lies at the foot of Xiaotangshan Mountain in Changping District. It is so named because it is on the same central axis as the Forbidden City and Tian'anmen.

The water is rich in minerals and trace elements and has many special curative effects. The temperature of the water is between 28 and 32 degree Centigrade. Although you can comfortably take a hot spring bath in any of the villa houses inside the resort, the newly renovated Amusement Palace outside the accommodation area is also a lot of fun. The hot springs are used to create a miniature tropical forest under a glass roof, and there are private bathing and massage areas, a full length swimming pool and a water-slide.

Where: Xiaotangshan Mountain **Getting there:** Take the Sixth Ring Road toward Changping. Leave the ring road at the Xiaotangshan exit and go to the Daliushu Roundabout. Drive west from the roundabout for 1 kilometer. **Prices:** 100 yuan for an all-in-one ticket for the Hot Spring Amusement Palace, 80 yuan an admission ticket only, 80 yuan for 2 hours in the big hot spring pool (for 4-6 people), 480 yuan per night or 280 yuan for 3 hours for open door bath in the deluxe suite, 50 yuan for the open door pool, 100 yuan per hour for the Happy Hot Spring Pool. **Tel:** 6179 2406

Tianlongyuan Wenquan Jiayuan (The Origin of Heavenly Dragon Hot Spring Home) is several kilometers to the west of the Ming Tombs in Changping County. The water bubbles up from 2,000 metres underground, coming out at 43.5 degree Centigrade. The spring is of the sodium carbonate type, rich in calcium and magnesium and drinkable.

This resort provides two types of hot spring baths; Chuanshang Renjia Hot Spring Bath (Sichuan Family) and Tianyi Shengshui Hot Spring Bath (Water Created from the Union of Man and Heaven) in two huge bathing halls centred on a central pool.

Where: West of Dengzhuang Village, Changping County **Getting there:** Take the Badaling Expressway from Madian Bridge on the Third Ring Road and leave at exit 13C, turn north at Changping Xiguang Roundabout and drive west for 2 kilometers. **Prices:** 138 yuan, includes sauna, shower, hot spring bath, medicine bath, swimming, ice skating, dance show and resting in the lounge. **Tel:** 8010 0088

